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Welcome AOPA-Belize

AOPA-Belize has just become the 67th IAOPA affiliate, following approval of the IAOPA Board. Please welcome President Thomas Wierum and his organization at Primebuilders@btl.net.

EASA Proposes Regulations for Foreign Registered Aircraft

IAOPA Europe Deputy Vice President Martin Robinson reports that foreign registered aircraft (FRA) operating in Europe may soon be subject to additional rules under a proposed amendment to European Aviation Safety Agency regulations. The proposal will require a FRA based in Europe to comply with most EASA regulations, including pilot licensing, aircraft certification, maintenance and other standards. Unfortunately, a FRA complying with EASA rules may invalidate the country of registration's certificate of airworthiness if EASA authorized modifications are added to the aircraft. This has serious cost implications for general aviation operators in Europe.

EASA's proposals may also stop non-European flight training organizations from training pilots for EASA pilot certificates. This is because foreign flight schools must use EASA certified flight instructors for this purpose. Professional flight schools point out the impact these proposals will have on an airline industry that is already suffering from pilot shortages.

EASA notices of proposed amendment may be found at easa.europa.eu/ws_prod/r/r_npa.php

New Air Regulations Seen as Harmful to Kenyan General Aviation

AOPA-Kenya Chairman Harro Trempenau states, "5 August 2008 will be remembered as the darkest day in eighty years of Kenyan aviation. The new Kenya Civil Aviation Regulations (KCARS), perceived as 'fundamentally flawed' by air operators, became effective that day. The avalanche of complaints of the aircraft operators, engineers and pilots notwithstanding, KCAA used all tactics at its disposal, transparent or dubious, to implement its vision for regulating flying in this country. At the end of a four year battle between stakeholders and the Authority, KCAA completely sidelined the stakeholders and resorted to deceit to get its way. The highly-touted 'consultations with the Stakeholders' turned out to have been a meaningless gimmick as none of the weaknesses and erroneous content in the new regulations that were highlighted by the operators, were remedied.

"For the last three years, air operators had objected to the draft proposals, pointing out that they will lead to bureaucratic 'gridlock.' In their desperate quest to appease the aircraft operators and to have in place some form of regulations before the ICAO Safety And Security Audit that is being undertaken at present, KCAA agreed to a few compromises with the operators. This 'agreement' was, however, simply ignored by KCAA."

Trempenau notes that AOPA-Kenya and other Kenyan aviation groups will work to change the new regulations to a more workable and realistic form.

The Struggle for Fuerstenfeldbruck Continues

The historic Fuerstenfeldbruck airfield near Munich, Germany continues to be the subject of a year-long quest of AOPA-Germany and other interests to both save and convert this important piece of real estate to a general aviation airfield. The airport served as a military primary training base during World War II and achieved notoriety during the 1972 Olympic games.

For some time this airport has been offered for use as a general aviation airfield but a series of bureaucratic and political events have prevented its conversion. While "Fursty" has been used as a general aviation airport and actually subsidized for that purpose for a few years by the nearby Munich-International airport (to siphon off small aircraft operations from the air carrier terminal), its future remains in doubt. Its location and desirable property value make it an attractive target for a variety of commercial interests, including BMW for use as a high-speed test track.

The key to permanent use as a general aviation airport is to receive an airport certification designator from the German State of Bavaria. Unfortunately, attempts to achieve this designation over the past two years have been unsuccessful, despite the best efforts and legal appeals of AOPA-Germany. A ruling from the Bavarian court of appeals is expected soon, however.

Ironically, one of the best arguments for maintaining the property as an airfield is that the wildlife and vegetation contained on the airfield property is considered to be environmentally highly desirable and therefore protected by European standards as a "Flora-Fauna Habitat" wildlife refuge.

FAA Intends to Reduce VOR Network Soon

The US FAA has confirmed to AOPA-US that it is making plans to reduce the network of VORs across the country, beginning in 2010.

However, AOPA members are not quite convinced that a widespread VOR reduction is acceptable. Survey information shows that only about half of AOPA-US members believe a significant number of VORs can be eliminated without affecting their flight operations.

Despite high levels of GPS use, FAA regulations require pilots who use GPS to also carry a primary navigation system for IFR operations, and for general aviation the primary system available for regulatory compliance is VOR. Second-generation GPS systems that incorporate the Wide Area Augmentation System (WAAS) do not require VOR as a backup, but the current state of equipage in the general aviation fleet is about 15 percent.

In a letter to the FAA, AOPA-US cautioned the FAA against making plans to reduce VORs because there are several key issues currently preventing the dismantling of the VOR infrastructure. Barriers include pilot confidence in relying solely on GPS signals and the lack of systematic implementation of area navigation. AOPA pointed out that the FAA should broaden its focus to ensure that all IFR flights can be conducted from takeoff to touchdown with an IFR GPS, regardless of the airports involved. Ultimately, the FAA needs to change its policies to reduce GA's reliance on VORs.

International Civil Aviation Day Set for 7 December 2008

The Council of ICAO has approved "Tomorrow's Aviation – a world of opportunity for skilled aviation personnel" as the theme for this year's worldwide celebration of International Civil Aviation Day on 7 December 2008 and throughout the year 2009.

The purpose of the annual celebration is to establish and reinforce worldwide awareness of the importance of international civil aviation in the social and economic development of States. ICAO will be promoting its role in the safety, efficiency and regularity of international civil aviation operations during the celebrations.

Flag raisings, award presentations, air shows, exhibitions, tours and symposia are all common features of activities used to feature this day. For further information on International Civil Aviation Day -- see www.icao.int. A brief description of International Civil Aviation Day, news releases as well as messages from the President of the Council and the Secretary General from previous celebrations, can be found on the ICAO website at www.icao.int/icao/en/aviation_day.htm.

The International Council of Aircraft Owner and Pilot Associations represents the interests of more than 470,000 pilots and aircraft owners in 66 countries. Formed in 1962, IAOPA is dedicated to promoting the peaceful uses of general aviation and aerial work worldwide.

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