

We haven't discussed air taxi operators of very light jets (VLJs) here on Runway Girl, but perhaps it's about time we did so. Because while a small fleet of Eclipse 500s might not make much of a dent in the world of commercial travel, a fleet of several hundred running with fast and furious frequency certainly will. And that, my friend, is not a far off proposition.



Linear Air, for example, currently flies four Eclipse 500s but intends to operate 300 of type within the next two to three years. The company, which operates from Hanscombe Field near Boston and Westchester County airport near New York, has not been deterred by the 5 June emergency landing in Chicago that prompted federal regulators to order an immediate inspection of throttles on all Eclipse 500s.

Its expansion plan also remains on track, even as the Eclipse 500 faces further scrutiny. Prominent US congressman James Oberstar has asked the US DOT's Office of Inspector General to investigate allegations that the FAA certificated the Eclipse 500 very light jet in 2006 despite objections from the agency's aircraft certification engineers and flight-test pilots.

Responding to Oberstar's move, Linear stresses the following: All Linear Air planes are inspected regularly; if any issues arise they are promptly taken care of and any changes that need to be made to the pilot's manual are done; and if an issue was to arise it would be promptly reported to the FAA and Eclipse.

Additionally, Linear Air stands by the comments made by Eclipse CEO Vern Raburn, who denies any wrongdoing by his company and told USA Today that Eclipse is in "complete and total conformity" with federal regulations. Raburn feels that the complaint is an internal FAA matter between workers and administrators, notes the article highlighted above.

Linear recently closed a \$3.5 million round of equity financing. Proceeds from this round will support the company's continued growth of the Eclipse 500 jet service launched in November 2007 as well as expansion of service in the Northeast.

"In these days of spiking fuel cost, our Eclipse jets are by far the most economical business jets available. Our plan is to continue to grow our fleet and replicate this success on a national level," says Linear president and CEO William Herp.

So why fly Linear? Here are the company's top ten answers to that question.

Top 10 Reasons to Fly Private

1. When flying private, travellers avoid spending the 53 percent of overall travel time that is spent just waiting in major airports for a flight. This includes check-in, security lines and flight delays.
2. Flying private reduces trip time to destinations by approximately 3.5 hours.
3. Leave on time and arrive on time - specified by the traveller - with private air. Commercial travellers suffer from late departures more than a quarter of the time and late arrivals almost a third of the time.
4. Flights can be booked according to the traveller's schedule, creating efficiencies that eliminate unnecessary overnight stays, long commutes from major airports to final destinations and unexpected cancellations.
5. Private air charters can go into 10-times more airports than commercial flights. By utilizing regional airports, air travel needs can be met from convenient locations, closer to homes and offices.
6. The well-appointed cabins on private jets are more conducive to meetings and add to business travellers' levels of productivity.
7. The average age of a commercial plane is more than 25 years old. On the whole, private planes are newer and more eco-friendly.
8. Luggage is loaded directly onto the aircraft, in view of the traveller, unlike the hundreds of thousands of mishandled and lost bags in commercial airports.
9. The average light jet flight is only 90 minutes, getting travellers from point-to-point efficiently.
10. Leisure travellers can get to weekend destinations quicker and avoid getting stuck in weekend traffic.

Prepared By

