Babbitt Discusses FAA Funding, Controller Training and PMO

Air traffic control has come a long way from the 1930s, when controllers navigated via bonfires, beacons, and personal communications with pilots, said J. Randolph Babbitt, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) administrator. This year marks the 75th anniversary of air traffic control systems in the United States, and ATCA has been a very significant part of the industry, Babbitt said during the opening ceremony for ATCA’s 56th Annual Conference and Exposition Oct. 3.

“Advances in this industry have helped us to maintain and achieve an unparalleled safety record,” he said, noting that each day, 15,000 U.S. air traffic controllers handle 50,000 to 70,000 operations. But safety can always be improved, Babbitt said. The FAA has just accepted 50 recommendations from a blue-ribbon independent

Global Harmonization: Can’t We All Just Get Along?

Noting that air traffic is the “first global business and it’s important that it remains a global business,” Nancy Graham of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) kicked off a rousing Oct. 5 morning discussion about harmonization. ICAO began with a keynote address by Eric Stefanello, Senior Vice President ATM, Boeing.

“Advances in this industry have consistently grown in number of workers, and because of that, Boeing is committed to CANSO World Congress,” Dumont said. “Our industry relies on the global ATM and air traffic industry, by the ATM and air traffic

ATCA, CANSO Announce New Global Conference in Madrid

For more than half a century, ATCA has gathered the “right aviation professionals to discuss the right topics,” ATCA President Pete Dumont said as he kicked off the ATCA 56th Annual Conference and Exposition Oct. 3. Now, thanks to a new conference sponsored by ATCA and the Civil Air Navigation Services Organization (CANSO), that discussion will become global.

The inaugural CANSO World ATM Congress will debut in Madrid in 2013, said Dumont and CANSO Chairman Paul Riemens. The conference, which will take place Feb. 12 to 14, is a “world-class global event by our industry for our industry,” Dumont said.

“As you look around the conference landscape these days, you’ll see a lot of commercial, for-profit enterprises,” he added. A company may put on an air conference one week and a health care conference another next week. But the CANSO World ATM Congress is a “global forum for the global ATM and air traffic industry,” Dumont said.

Riemens said the large-scale exhibition and conference will be “The annual event for the ATM industry, featuring CEOs, senior managers, and experts from air navigation service providers; airline and airport stakeholders; and politicians — all the people who matter in the industry.”

Breaking Attendance News!

The ATCA Annual has consistently grown in numbers in the last four years and this year we had record attendance in both the conference and the exhibit hall. On Oct. 4, buses were full from the FAA throughout the day!

Jane Garvey Honored as 2011 Glen A. Gilbert Awardee

Garvey, the 14th Administrator of the FAA and current chairman of Meridiam Infrastructure North America accepted the Glen A. Gilbert trophy from ATCA Chairman Monte Belger. During the Award Banquet, former Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta paid tribute to Garvey, noting: “She is really a great American hero in terms of her service, whether it was in Massachusetts, at the Federal Highway Administration, or at the FAA.”

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BE THERE:

» ATCA/FAA/NASA Technical Symposium
May 22 – 24, 2012
Resorts Hotel and Casino
Atlantic City, NJ

» 57th ATCA Annual Conference & Exposition
Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center
National Harbor, MD
Today’s ATO Focuses On Execution, Not Planning

W hen he was serving in Afghanistan in 2004 and 2005, David Grizzle was amazed by all the plans he encountered.

For instance, there was the evacuation plan: If he heard an American-sounding siren, he should run for cover, but if the siren sounded European, he should duck and cover. It sounded like a good plan until the first nighttime rocket attack, when a frenzied Grizzle couldn’t remember which siren was which and found himself trying to pull on his pants and crawl under his bed at the same time.

“This was my first and most profound revelation that the capability of executing a plan can be far more determinative of outcomes than the quality and content of the plan,” said Grizzle, chief operating officer of the Federal Aviation Administration’s Air Traffic Organization (ATO). “I began to use the phrase: The worst plan that you can execute is better than the best plan that you can’t.”

Grizzle told ATCA attendees that he applies this principle to his job today. “The most exciting developments at the FAA have very little to do with the development of new activities, but instead have to do with the activities to develop the very sound plans of our predecessors,” he said during a Monday afternoon speech.

Grizzle and ATO Deputy Chief Operating Officer Rick Ducharme, who spoke to ATCA attendees Monday morning, emphasized how the ATO is implementing and adapting to the many changes associated with the NextGen plan.

Ducharme said ATO is working to simplify its lines of accountability and reorganization, making communication more accurate and timely. This includes reducing the chain of command by eliminating four vice president positions between the COO and deputy COO positions, he said.

Safety operations have now been combined with training to ensure that FAA Academy graduates fully understand the Air Traffic Safety Action Program (ATSAP), he said. In addition, information technology, finance, and acquisition are now under one umbrella. “That brings a structure that is typical among healthy, complex organizations,” Grizzle said.

The NextGen office has been elevated to the administration level, reporting to FAA Deputy Administrator Michael Huerta, and the new Program Management Office (PMO) will bring together 125 capital management programs beginning Oct. 9, Grizzle said. Not only will the PMO ensure all the programs work together, but it will also be a single point of contact for vendors, he said.

Ducharme said other improvements include emphasizing training and “putting swagger back in the organization.”

“Our training program needs to match the new technologies. As we move forward in NextGen, we’re making sure we have the simulation and training tools at the Academy...”

Capt. Moody Recounts British Airways Flight 9’s Run-in With a Volcano

W ith British sangfroid and dry humor, Captain Eric Moody put a personal spin on the famous story of how he flew his Boeing 747 though a volcanic eruption 19 years ago and, despite total engine failure, landed the plane safely.

Moody, who delivered the keynote address Tuesday morning, flew for British airlines for more than a quarter century, retiring in 1996. But his journey started much earlier than that.

“The first record in my family of me wanting to fly apparently was at age 4,” Moody said. As he stood on a hill on his grandfather’s farm in Southampton watching dogfights during World War II, he dreamed of being a fighter pilot. But the dream changed the day the first British Overseas Airways Corp. (BOAC) plane flew over his head. Smitten with the idea of traveling to exotic places, he learned to glide at age 16 and got his private pilot’s license at 17. By age 23, he was a graduate of BOAC’s Hamble College of Air Training and a professional pilot.

In 1971, he flew his first copilot mission on the spiffy new Boeing 747-200. Ten years later, he was named captain.

In June 1982, Moody was living his childhood dream, flying a nine-day trip out of London’s Heathrow airport to Beirut, Lebanon; Muscat, Oman; Jakarta, Indonesia; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; and Perth, Australia.

As he, his copilot and engineer drove to the Kuala Lumpur airport for their evening takeoff, “the first thing I noticed was how dark it was. There was no moon,” Moody said. Then he learned that his airplane coming in from Bombay was half an hour late. “This will be important later on,” he told the rapt audience.

Captain Eric Moody talks about losing four engines on a Boeing 747 after flying through volcanic ash from Mount Galunggung, Indonesia. He landed safely with three engines running. Moody gave an impassioned presentation at the Oct. 4 morning keynote session.
Launching in Madrid, February 12-14, 2013
CANSO World combines a large-scale exhibition, industry conference and social events providing networking opportunities and the chance to find out the latest trends and developments in air traffic control.

CANSO World is backed by leading air navigation service providers and industry suppliers, making it the only event organised by the industry, for the industry.

What the industry is already saying...

“Lockheed Martin is looking forward to participating in the CANSO World event. As a long-standing associate member of CANSO we see this as an important mechanism to improve communications between industry and the ANSPs.”

Sandy Samuel, Vice President, Lockheed Martin, IS&GS-Civil Transportation Solutions Business

“It’s a wonderful thing that ATCA and CANSO have gotten together to create an event for the ANSPs and the ATC companies to come together like this. We see it as a tremendous opportunity.”

Bob Coulson, Senior Executive Account Manager, Harris Corporation

“CANSO’s 130 Members are united about the need for change: “CANSO’s goal is to help the industry help itself. This is about bringing together the global aviation community to deliver the transformation that we need, to the benefit of the entire aviation system.”

Greg Russell, CEO Airservices Australia

“One of the reasons why we decided to join CANSO was due to the fact that it is able to bring together the decision makers in the industry, both suppliers and ANSPs. We are looking forward to the opportunities that CANSO World will offer in 2013.”

Bobby Sturgell, SVP, Rockwell Collins
Harmonization

Continued from page 1

address on ICAO’s efforts toward global airspace harmonization.

“Harmonization is really easy to say but it’s damn hard to do,” she said. “Harmonization is a nice diplomatic word for negotiation.”

Nevertheless, harmonization is key because a global framework is needed to ensure safety is maintained and enhanced; ATM improvement programs are harmonized; and barriers to future efficiency and environmental gains are removed, at reasonable cost, she said.

ICAO has developed a four-step plan that sets the stage for global interoperability, culminating with an international agreement scheduled for the 12th Air Navigation Conference in Montreal in November 2012.

Graham said ICAO has brought together a team of international organizations to develop a block system that various countries can use for upgrades. The blocks are made up of a series of modules intended to be consumed as needed. Each module is grouped into four performance areas: greener airports, globally interoperable systems and data, optimum capacity and flexible flights, and efficient flight path planning.

Block 0 consists of technologies that currently exist but aren’t fully implemented, such as performance-based navigation (PBN), continuous descent operations (CDO) and continuous climb operations (CCO).

Block 1 includes technologies that “could happen maybe in our lifetimes,” Graham said, such as navigation equipment, wake vortex, A-SMGCS, A-CDM, remote tower, A/D MAN, FF-ICE 1, digital ATM and SWIM.

Blocks 3 and 4 address future technologies.

Following the keynote, Graham moderated the Global Harmonization session, which brought together a panel of experts to address a series of questions, including:

The industry always has a backup plan in the event that governments can’t get their act together and figure out what they need. What is that plan?

Neil Planzer of Boeing: “We have a plan B, a plan C and a plan D. Our plan B is that [industry] will integrate it. Technology integration isn’t difficult, but it is expensive and stupid that we have to do that” rather than relying on air navigation service providers (ANSPs) to do it.

What do you see as the two or three key decisions that have to be made by the community as a whole?

Steve Bradford of the FAA: “I think we’re turning the corner with data comm” based on an agreement with the U.S. and Europe at the highest level. “But the one I actually think is underestimated is SWIM (System Wide Information Management). We all want to move into the information age. One of the major issues is what does it mean to share information beyond your own firewall with someone else? Someone needs to step up and determine if we need some sort of external cloud for data.”

Bob Humbertson, MITRE Corp.: “How to have valid data exchange. What concerns me about the future is those that can’t meet the mandate for Flight Plan 2012. We need to help them.”

David Schroeder, NATO: “At what point do we say we have to cut bait and move forward, and who doesn’t come along with us?”

Planzer: “We can’t seem to get data comm and SWIM done. It’s not that the technology is difficult. We have all the computer competency on the aircraft but we can’t get the ground infrastructure to communicate with it. It’s like buying a computer and deciding you don’t need a high-speed line in your home or the Internet.” ANSP managers are so invested in the ground structure that they fear the connectivity, he said.

Are we at a point where we need a rule to get us over the hump?

Planzer: “You need a rule because you can’t make the business case. You won’t make a business case until you get all the parts in place. A rule makes everybody have to buy stuff that doesn’t give them a benefit and that they don’t want.”

Bradford: “The problem is that ATM (air traffic management) is still a point-to-point mentality. You need to break down that mentality, and a rule won’t break that down.”

Schroeder: “We have to sell people on a common approach” because then “you’re going to get more buy-in rather than making a rule that there may be push-back on.”

Humbertson: “What has to be very clear if you make a rule is what operational improvement you’re trying to get,” which entails “convincing those that control the dollars as to why they should release even $1 to do this.”

Confidentiality of military and special-use flights is critical. What are the rules to mitigate this around the globe?

Schroeder: “There has to be some way to break down the firewalls [between military and commercial air operations]. It comes down to how much you want to spend and how technically detailed you want to get?”

Given the vast differences in constraints for different countries, how do you deal with low-demand users operating in high-demand airspace?

Graham: “You take those steps as you need to based on the traffic you have.”

Planzer: “They get dealt with by exceptions, but you have to drive down the number of exceptions. Maybe they never go to Heathrow; they have to go to Gatwick.”

Babbitt Continued from page 1

panel for air traffic controller training. “As we move forward with the transformation of NextGen, we need to make certain that the air traffic controllers in this country receive the best training possible,” he said.

Babbitt said the recommendations, which were posted on the FAA website Oct. 3, include:

• A more stringent evaluation of curriculum that includes “very standardized advance training.”

• Required training for controllers at their permanent field facility. “The goal is that every controller has the same skills,” Babbitt said. “We want to make sure that what we’re doing is consistent and uniform.”

• Yearly refresher courses for all controllers.

• Mobile simulation labs, which will give controllers in smaller facilities equal access to simulator training.

Babbitt also discussed changes the FAA is making internally to accommodate NextGen. The most significant change is the creation of an FAA Program Management Office (PMO) that will “act as bridge between strategic NextGen requirements and tactical implementation,” he said. “NextGen involves more than air traffic control.”

All NextGen-related programs will move into the PMO, which will streamline operations and result in better cost control and economies of scale, Babbitt said.

Despite uncertainties as to when funding will arrive — the FAA is now on its 22nd short-term reauthorization — the 2012 budget includes $18 billion for the FAA, Babbitt said. In addition, President Obama’s Putting America Back to Work proposal authorizes $50 billion for airport, road, railway, and transit system construction. This includes 150 miles of runways, $1 billion for NextGen research and development, and $2 billion for airport improvements, he said.

“President Obama certainly recognizes the importance of maintaining air safety,” Babbitt said. “But to achieve consistency, we need a clear path of established funding” from Congress that includes a multiyear reauthorization of the FAA.

European Commission Commends UK-Ireland Functional Airspace Block

Reform of Air Traffic Management in Europe is being brought about through European Union Single European Sky (SES) legislation. The establishment of Functional Airspace Blocks (FABs) are central to these reforms. FABs are State initiatives, which are implemented by the national ANSPs. Ireland and the UK created the first FAB in Europe (June 2008) by joining the operational activities of the Irish Aviation Authority and NATS.

The primary focus of the UK-Ireland FAB is to deliver savings to airspace users. Since it was established, the FAB has generated substantial savings to customers in terms of reduced fuel burn, track miles and CO2 emissions. Over 30 projects have been implemented to-date with a further 20 projects contained in the current FAB Plan 2011-14.
Future Aviation Advisory Committee Discusses Recommendations

In April 2010, Transportation Secretary Raymond LaHood commissioned the Future Aviation Advisory Committee (FAAC) to develop concrete, actionable recommendations on topics such as the environment, competitiveness, safety and labor. The committee developed 23 recommendations that were published in a final report this April.

During an Oct. 5 session, FAAC Chair Susan Kurland and six other representatives from the 18-member committee had a free-ranging discussion about FAAC’s work and its recommendations. Questions and answers included:

About a third of the FAAC recommendations involved NextGen. How has the NextGen Advisory Committee (NAC) picked up where FAAC left off?

Dave Barger, CEO of JetBlue and chair of NAC: When you start to talk about things like Metroplex, metrics objectives and equipage and marry them into tasks like data comm, it’s a very fulsome task. The committee has been in place for 13 months, and there’s a sense of urgency, but it wasn’t too long ago that we were trying to get the 22nd extension for the FAA. We’ve got to get the funding going forward.

Astronaut Tells Tales of His Days In Flight

Retired NASA astronaut and Navy captain Scott Altman kept the Oct. 4 lunchtime crowd entertained with a keynote address detailing everything from his days as a pilot extra in the movie Top Gun, to his four shuttle flights and more than 50 days in space. Altman, who decided he wanted to be an astronaut as a 3-year-old, said the lessons he learned as an astronaut are applicable to the FAA today. Teamwork and being committed to a common goal is as important in space as it is on the ground, he said. “When we work together, we really can reach for the stars.”

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Panelists Discuss Ways to Fight Fatigue

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ryly noting that “I don’t have to tell you why we’re holding this session this year,” Alan Levin of Bloomberg News moderated an Oct. 4 well-attended panel discussion on Fatigue in Public Safety.

Sleep-deprived air traffic controllers have been the subject of recent media reports, but this issue isn’t limited to the air traffic industry, Levin said. The National Transportation Safety Board has found fatigue to be a factor in many accidents, most recently a marine incident that caused the biggest oil spill in Texas history, he said.

Dr. Deborah Gofreed of Arlington Sleep Medicine said that according to a National Sleep Foundation poll, the majority of Americans operate in a fatigued state. This is particularly problematic for shift workers, she said, because the body’s biological clock naturally wants us to work during the day and sleep at night.

“No one fully adjusts to shift work, but you can succeed if certain things are done,” Gofreed said. It’s better to schedule a worker forward—day, evening, night—rather than backward—night, evening, day. Weekly shift changes are also ineffective—it’s best to switch shifts either every few days or once every three to four weeks. Restorative naps during a shift appear to be very helpful, she said, as do stimulants like caffeine.

Alexis Brathwaite of the International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers’ Associations (IFATCA) said studies show that even though 80 percent of controllers believe fatigue is a challenge, they have mixed definitions of how to define it. Fifty-eight percent said fatigue doesn’t affect their skills, and 81 percent said they reported for duty even if they seemed tired. Research also shows cumulative fatigue is a contributor to psychosomatic conditions.

“Fatigue is a complex condition that can often lead to heated debate,” Brathwaite said. In the air traffic control industry, fatigue is traditionally viewed as a contractual issue, he said, but it should be a shared responsibility between employers, employees and operations managers.

Jeff Richards of the National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA), who is part of an FAA working group for fatigue, said in January the group released a report with 12 fatigue prevention recommendations for air traffic controllers.

The recommendations, which are based on 15 months of research, included establishing a way for employees to report that they are too tired to work, new methods to deal with sleep apnea and how to handle quick-turnaround “rattler” shifts.

Research shows that 2.8 percent of air traffic controllers suffer from sleep apnea, but based on studies conducted by the trucking industry, “we believe it’s at least 4 percent,” Richards said. Currently, sleep apnea treatment for air traffic controllers takes three to four weeks, “but now we’re looking at a five-day turnaround,” he said.

The report’s recommendation for a rattler is a nine-hour break between the third and fourth shift, a seven-hour day shift prior to a night shift and a two-and-a-half hour recuperative break during the midnight shift, Richards said.
Broadband, GPS Providers Duke it Out Over Dueling Airspace

Two key technologies — GPS and wireless broadband — are increasingly conflicting with each other. During the Oct. 3 session Spectrum Challenges for GPS Navigation, a panel of experts discussed efforts underway to allow both technologies to coexist.

At the heart of the issue is LightSquared’s national wireless broadband and satellite network, which, according to a Radio Technical Committee for Aeronautics (RTCA) study, could interfere with GPS navigation. The U.S. Department of Defense has also raised objections to the network’s interference with its GPS signals.

The RTCA study looked at three LightSquared broadband spectrum deployment phases in upper and lower radiofrequency bands, said panelist Chris Hegarty of MITRE Corp. The conclusion was that if the broadband operates in the upper bands, GPS below about 2,000 feet would be largely unavailable. However, at bands of 5 megahertz or below, the network appears to be compatible with GPS. That limit could stretch to 10 MHz, Hegarty said, but researchers concluded that quite a bit more work needs to be done before a definitive recommendation can be made.

“The aviation community consensus is that the upper channel is just a non-starter,” he said. “Otherwise, they’re not sure they’ve found the worst-case level, and final conclusions are still TBD.”

GPS is critical to NextGen technology, said panelist John Hickey of the FAA, and consequently, “a whole group in the government” is looking at how the LightSquared network could interfere with existing GPS operations, and is conducting weekly meetings with LightSquared officials.

Noting that President Obama has a strong initiative to spread broadband nationwide, Hickey said “there’s an honest effort in the government to find a win-win solution. It’s not going to be a slam-dunk deal on either side.”

Nevertheless, “This has been one of the most intractable problems I’ve ever faced in the 31 years I’ve been in aviation,” he said. “We can solve this, but the real problem we have is time and cost. The uncertainty about what is going to happen is having a chilling effect on operators’ ability and desire to buy NextGen equipment.”

Even though Jeff Carlisle of LightSquared said his company plans to restrict its network to 5 MHz and below, other panelists said there is much concern in the aviation industry that the network could expand in the future.

In addition, there are significant international ramifications, Hickey said.

“The U.S. has been trying to promote GPS around the world for many, many years,” he said, but

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Moody  
Continued from page 2

The 747 took off at 8 p.m., and climbed to 37,000 feet. As Moody wound his way up the spiral staircase to the lavatory on the 747's upper deck, he saw what looked like smoke billowing in from the skirting boards over the air conditioning vents.

Moody went back to the cockpit to report the smoke but was distracted by a spectacular view of St. Elmo’s fire from the windscreen. “There we were watching this wonderful display when the first officer began to upset the evening,” Moody said. “I thought about what they said in simulator training: Inject leadership,” he said. “I looked around for somebody to lead and settled on the engineer” who was sweating so much it was dripping off his nose. “I said: Come on, Barry, you’re not bloody trying. With that comment, engine four came to power, 14 minutes after it shut down.”

One minute and 20 seconds later, engine number three started up, stopping the descent at 12,000 feet. Thirty seconds later engines one and two started.

But then the number two engine began to surge, emitting a big sheet of flame. “It was shaking so hard I was concerned it might shake itself off the wing,” Moody said. “I was reluctant to shut it down but I had to.”

Moody realized that the autopilot had stayed on. “I reached forward and wound in a descent of 1,500 feet a minute on the autopilot,” he said. The copilot put in a mayday call to Jakarta air control, but due to static and language difficulties, the tower misunderstood and thought only one engine had failed. When they finally realized all four were out, “there was stunned silence.”

The crew then hauled out its emergency checklist titled “loss of all four generators.”

He knew from simulator training that he couldn’t attempt to start the engines until the plane dropped to 29,000 feet. He headed back to Java, 120 miles away, and decided to notify the chief steward. But that also meant alerting the passengers via the only usable intercom system.

“I thought about what to say and finally decided on: We have a small problem in that all four engines have stopped. We’re doing our utmost to get them going and I trust you’re not in too much distress. Will the chief steward please come to the flight deck,” Moody said.

Moody prepared to ditch the plane in the Indian Sea—quite distressing, he joked, because he is poor swimmer. “I had 250 pounds in my wallet and I thought what a bloody waste, that’s going into one of the deepest trenches in the world. We could have had a party last night with that money.”

He dropped the altitude and 15,000 feet and managed to get down to 12,000 feet. The ground on the west coast of Java is 10,000 feet, which would allow for about 10 minutes of glide.

“Five engine failures in 20 minutes I think is a world record.” —Capt. Eric Moody

Susan Kurland, Department of Transportation, moderates the Oct. 5 Future Aviation Advisory Committee panel discussion.

Future Aviation  
Continued from page 5

should be globalization as long as it creates more U.S. jobs. FAAC members agreed to disagree on whether foreign investment would be helpful.

How do you bridge the gap in understanding between management and the workforce?

McAhron-Schultz: It is hard to get to consensus. There was consensus on the importance of training.

Bill McGee, travel and aviation consultant for Consumers Union: I’d like to see more of a consumer voice on labor issues. If there’s discretion on the part of passengers about the industry, in many ways it’s intertwined with labor issues.

The U.S. has tremendous air, road and railway systems, but sometimes they don’t always communicate. How can that be improved?

Baer: The FAAC finding is that the way the transportation department is structured, these systems are in silos. Now there’s an effort to cut across the silos with model or pilot projects that can test the idea that there are better ways to serve certain markets and put resources in places where they’re more effective.

ATO  
Continued from page 2

introduce it to new folks,” he said. “We have a much more aggressive training process. I think there’s a noticeable difference in how prepared the folks we get in the field are.”

Revamping Academy programs has resulted in a 13.1 percent wash-out rate this year compared to 5 percent last year, Ducharme said. “I think the Academy should be the number one screening organization for bringing new controllers into the field,” he added.

Grizzle gave an update on how various aspects of NextGen operations are being implemented, including:

En Route Automation Modernization (ERAM). There are 18 ERAM centers to go before establishing operational readiness, he said.

Terminal Automation Modernization and Replacement (TAMR). This will result in a single common automation platform for the first time in the FAA’s history, Grizzle said.

Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B). Grizzle said 300 ground stations are operational, adapted to four of the FAA’s operational platforms. ADS-B is also slated to become operational in March at ERAM’s Houston center.

System-wide information management (SWIM). Segment one is working with seven diverse NAS programs, ranging from flow management to special use airspace, Grizzle said.

Data Communications. This program delivers support for more than 6,000 aircraft and 1.2 million flight deck and controller messages daily, Grizzle said, but also highlights the problem of competing interests. There’s a desire for international harmonization of messages, and controllers and pilots want to integrate data comm in a seamless way. “It’s like each interest has a piece of the puzzle and we have to make the pieces fit together to form a complete picture that has everybody’s face in it,” he said.

Voice system program. Many switches are still DOS based and have to be rebooted with a floppy disk, Grizzle said. The FAA is working on a more flexible platform to reconfigure the voice system.

“The worst plan that you can execute is better than the best plan that you can’t.” —David Grizzle

HIGHLIGHTS

In March at ERAM’s Houston center. System-wide information management (SWIM). Segment one is working with seven diverse NAS programs, ranging from flow management to special use airspace, Grizzle said.

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Spectrum
Continued from page 7

some countries have been reticent to adopt the technology for fear that the U.S. military could shut down GPS for national security reasons. “The irony of this is that the civilian business use is now compromising the use of GPS,” Hickey said.

Carlisle said in addition to promising to use the low end of the radio frequency (RF) spectrum, LightSquared has developed filtering equipment and is proposing to retrofit government GPS devices. But he warned that this is a problem that’s not unique to his company.

“The RF network is not going to become less crowded,” he said. “There’s not a magic solution for the need to make more spectrum available for wireless broadband services. Even in rural areas, we’re going to see more significant capacity problems” as an increasing number of people and businesses use 4G services.

This has been an issue for 10 years, and there have already been two agreements with broadband providers to limit harmful interference with GPS by using the lower end of the RF spectrum, Carlisle said.

“The bottom line is that this is not the first difficult interference issue that has been raised, and I guarantee you it won’t be the last,” he said. “The challenge is not to say: ‘Oh, there’s interference; shut everyone down.’ The challenge is to use today’s technologies to provide viable options,” via a give-and-take discussion with both broadband and GPS providers.

Jennifer Warren of Lockheed Martin said the previous broadband-GPS agreements dealt with ancillary or complementary wireless networks rather than a stand-alone network like LightSquared’s.

“It’s unclear about how the [RF] neighborhood would be able to support a total stand-alone mobile wireless network,” she said. “Good engineers from all the stakeholders are trying to figure this out. We have an expectation that the regulatory process will unfold in a certain way and that all stakeholders will be able to participate.”

Anne Swanson, an attorney with Dow Lohnes, said “the GPS industry has made it clear it supports the deployment of mobile broadband, but not at the risk of harming GPS. Many of the arguments we’ve heard from LightSquared can be summed up as that basically the GPS industry should have seen this coming,” but the industry expected the network to be ancillary rather than stand-alone.

Added Hegarty: “My personal view is that I don’t believe we can hold the GPS industry responsible for this state of affairs.”

CANSO World — Right Time for ATC

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— Peter F. Dumont, President and CEO, ATCA

FaA Administrator Randy Babbitt exits the FAA Communications Support Team Emergency Response Vehicle after touring it in the exhibit hall Oct. 3. In his Keynote Address earlier in the day, Babbitt discussed changes the FAA is making internally to accommodate NextGen. The most significant change is the creation of an FAA Program Management Office (PMO) that will “act as bridge between strategic NextGen requirements and tactical implementation.”
Photos from ATCA 56

(top): ATCA recognized 2011 Awards Program recipients Oct. 3.

(middle): Dave Strider, North Star Group, helps Brandy Ingargiola, FAA, use a 737-800 flight simulator at the FAA NextGen booth in the exhibit hall.

(bottom): A mirror image of the atrium of the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center, site of the ATCA 56th Annual Conference and Exposition.

(above): Attendees crowd the exhibit hall Oct. 3.

(left): Peter F. Dumont, President and CEO of ATCA, welcomes attendees to a keynote session.

(above): View more photos from the Annual at www.flickr.com/ATCA_now

(top): Rick Ducharme, Senior Vice President of Operations, Air Traffic Organization – FAA, cracks a smile during the NextGen Workforce Challenge session.

(second row, left to right) Matt Hampton, DOT, the FAA’s Greg Burke, moderator Charlie Keegan, Raytheon, and FAA executives Steve Bradford and Rob Tucker participate in the new Interactive Leadership Panel Monday at ATCA 56.