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FLYING NEWS & NOTES



Piaggio Perseveres

JOHN BINGHAM, PRESIDENT of Piaggio America, reported that the "company, as of today, is in a very solid state, which is refreshing in today's market." Some of the company's success is due to its partnerships with the United Arab Emirates' Mubadala Development Co. and Tata Limited (the British part of the Indian Tata Group), which "year to year get stronger," Bingham said.

The market has been "horrible; it truly is a horrible market," Bingham said, but Piaggio has no "white tails," no unsold airplane, and continues to build to order. As a result, he said, the market value of used Piaggio P.180 Avantis has stayed good.

Last year Piaggio delivered 24 aircraft, but expectations for this year are for only half that. Nevertheless, the company is expanding its service network and exploring new markets. The announcement of a new distributor in Brazil (Noar Aviacao) and the plans to establish five service centers in the

country are elements of the company's expansion into new markets. **The recent sale to Air Ambulance Worldwide and the airplane's adaptability as an air ambulance in the United States portend a healthy future market.**

At NBAA last October, Piaggio shared its booth with Benetti, an Italian manufacturer of luxury yachts, with which it has signed a comarketing agreement. On display at the booth was the new Benetti class range, the Vision 145-foot motoryacht. In addition to the shared marketing and communications activities, the two companies will dedicate exclusive opportunities reserved for their customer base.

To date, there are 200 Avanti aircraft in operation (107 in the United States and 93 in the rest of the world). The fleet, at last count, had amassed more than 500,000 flight hours. The high-time aircraft has logged 8,650 hours and 13,080 landings. Avantair, with 55 Avantis, has been flying them at an average of 120 hours per aircraft per month.