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DATE: *JAN 3*

TO: *Dudley Tenney, Professional Pilot May*

FROM: Kathryn Creedy, ATR Marketing 202-434-8559 *918-495-1624*

RE: *you request*

fax: 918-495-1837

NUMBER OF PAGES TO FOLLOW: *20*

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ACCESS # PHLP78128

HEADLINE ...WHILE FSF'S MATTHEWS BLASTS IAPA, 'FLAWED' NEWS MEDIA
ACCIDENT

REPORTS

LENGTH ESTIMATED INFORMATION UNITS: 5.1 Words: 624

DATE 12/12/94

SOURCE Phillips Business Information (PHLP)

Commuter/Regional Airline News (CMRG) (CRAN)

Volume: 12

Issue: 48

(Copyright 1994)

Stuart Matthews, the chairman and chief executive officer of the Flight Safety Foundation, said Dec. 9 that the flying public is "being misled and needlessly alarmed by flawed press reports on aviation accidents and incidents and hysterical accounts of the industry's performance."

Saying that commercial air travel is "indisputably the safest form of mass transportation available today," Matthews singled out for special criticism the Washington-headquartered International Airline Passengers Association.

Following a National Transportation Safety Board recommendation last month that all passenger operations be conducted under the more stringent requirements of 14 CFR Part 121, IAPA urged its members to avoid flying on commuter aircraft with 30 seats or fewer.

On Dec. 2, IAPA Executive Director David Stempler told a news conference he would urge his members to avoid flying ATR-42 and -72 aircraft unless the FAA prohibits their operation in known or suspected icing conditions, which the FAA has refused to do, despite a National Transportation Safety Board recommendation that it do so until a special certification team has re-examined the ATR certification process.

"Such comments are irresponsible, incorrect and counterproductive, Matthews said in his Dec. 9 statement. IAPA, said Matthews, provides rental car discounts and other services to its members, and accidental death insurance coverage must be purchased from IAPA to join the organization.

"No other industry has as much invested and as much at stake in safety as the aviation industry," said Matthews. "Industry standards and performance are outstanding, which a close look at the record proves." The commuter industry's safety record has been skewed by the method used to categorize accident statistics, Matthews said. The commuter category has included hazardous operations such as "bush" flying in Alaska. Furthermore, he said, FAA statistics indicated that 15 percent of all commuter accidents involve training flights with no passengers.

The most recent full-year statistics compiled by the FAA indicated that in 1993 the commuter accident rate, excluding Alaskan operations and helicopter operations, was 3.7 accidents per 100,000 departures, compared with 2.9 accidents per 100,000 departures for Part 121 operations.

Matthews' statements were echoed in recent FSF-initiated safety discussions with other industry and regulatory agency leaders.

"Some of the {press} reports {about aviation accidents} have bordered on the irresponsible," said John K. Lauber, a retiring member of the NTSB. "Some of the confusion about facts may be caused by reporters who do not understand the technical issues and others who fail to report objectively."

Matthew acknowledged that some critics, including Stempler, have charged that the FAA should have followed a safety board
* recommendation to prohibit the intentional ATR operations in icing conditions.

Instead, following the Oct. 31 fatal crash of American Eagle Flight 4184 near Roselawn, Ind., the FAA issued new pilot operating procedures, later issuing an airworthiness directive to prohibit autopilot and flap use during icing conditions.

Public perceptions of these type of aircraft are often difficult to change, Matthews said.

"When people see smaller airplanes on the evening television news, they are often led to believe that the aircraft are less sophisticated and less reliable than larger, jet aircraft, when in fact many of these aircraft are more sophisticated and have more up-to-date equipment and design features than some of their older jet counterparts."

"There are still a lot of people out there who see a propeller and don't realize that it's a jet {turboprop} engine {on a sophisticated current technology aircraft," Matthews' statement quoted Regional Airlines Association President Walt Coleman as having said. "They think it's an old airplane."

Matthews' strong statement may be indicative of a strong new aviation safety leadership initiative by the FSF. In recently months, the foundation has announced its effort to seek a reduction by 50 percent of all airline accidents worldwide by the year 2010.

ACCESS # PHLP78112

HEADLINE FAA HOLDS RARE MEDIA BRIEFING ON NTSB RECOMMENDATIONS ON ATR-72...

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DATE 12/12/94

SOURCE Phillips Business Information (PHLP)

Commuter/Regional Airline News (CMRG) (CRAN)

Volume: 12

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Stung by new controversy as to whether the ATR-72 commuter turboprop aircraft is safe to fly in known or suspected icing conditions, the Federal Aviation Administration called a rare news conference Dec. 2 to announce its response to National Transportation Safety Board recommendations, one of which asked for a ban on operations in those conditions.

Not surprisingly, the FAA defended its certification of the ATR-72 and its sister aircraft, the smaller ATR-42, and said that to accept the safety board recommendation would amount to "grounding" the plane, which it refused to do. Immediately following the briefing, conducted by Deputy Administrator Linda Hall Dashle and Associate Administrator Tony Broderick, the International Airline Passengers Association announced it would advise its members to avoid ATR-72 and ATR-42 aircraft until the FAA issues an order preventing the operation of them in known or reported icing conditions.

* "IAPA acknowledges that the ATR aircraft have had an excellent safety record in the past, but the recent uncertainty about its ability to operate in icing conditions, as stated by the NTSB, leads us to issue this warning to IAPA members until the situation is fully resolved," said IAPA spokesman David Stempler.

In his Dec. 2 letter to safety board Chairman Jim Hall responding to the board's Nov. 7 recommendations, Administrator David Hinson outlined a series of steps he said the FAA has taken since the Oct. 31 crash of a Simmons Airlines ATR-72 on approach to Chicago, in a holding pattern in icing conditions.

Hinson did not respond to safety recommendation A-94-182, which called for a prohibition on intentional operation until the effect of upper wing surface ice on the flying qualities and aileron hinge movement characteristics are examined further is the special certification review begun by the FAA on Nov. 9. On Nov. 16, the FAA issued an airworthiness directive, which prohibited use of the ATRs' autopilots in icing conditions or in moderate or greater turbulence.

However, the stakes were raised when a group of Simmons Airlines pilots refused to fly the ATR-72 in reported icing

conditions on Nov. 27. (C/R News Dec. 5, 1994, page 1) C/R News learned that the pilots flew the aircraft on later flights after receiving requested reports on further weather conditions in the region.

The FAA conceded that the pilot-in-command was the final authority as to whether a particular flight was safe to fly, and the Air Line Pilots Association, which represents Simmons pilots, raced to defend them.

"We've been working continuously and will continue to commit all of our resources until we're satisfied we've addressed all safety issues. The American public deserves no less," Hinson said in a separate statement released to reporters on Dec. 2. "The FAA acted quickly to implement actions responsive to NTSB recommendations."

ACCESS # PHLP78124

HEADLINE FAA ORDERS GROUNDING OF ATRS IN 'KNOWN' OR 'FORECAST' ICING

CONDITIONS

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(Copyright 1994)

WASHINGTON Federal Aviation Administrator David R. Hinson announced Dec. 9 that the agency issued an emergency airworthiness directive prohibiting ATR-42 and ATR-72 aircraft from flying in known or forecast icing conditions. The order, effectively immediately, in effect grounds operation of the type in much of the United States.

"The FAA has been working day and night to develop any information about this accident," Hinson said referring to the Oct. 31 accident at Roselawn, Ind. "When we have the data, we take all necessary safety action. The information we have now accumulated now calls for immediate and direct action."

The emergency AD follows a briefing on the morning of Dec. 9 by French civil aviation officials to their American counterparts. French testing included wind tunnel trials and high-speed taxi tests with the aircraft. Although the exact cause of the Roselawn accident is still undetermined by the NTSB, icing is indicated as a likely element. Specifically, according to Associate Administrator Tony Broderick, the parts of the aircraft affected are an area of the wing not previously thought to be subjected to icing.

The new evidence provides, for the first time, a specific mechanism by which icing could cause severe control problems, the FAA said. If icing occurs in the area located behind the deicing boot and in front of the wing's aileron, it can cause loss of lateral control. Loss of aileron control could lead to an uncommanded roll event, resulting in loss of control of the aircraft.

The condition can occur during a flight in temperatures below 40 degrees Fahrenheit, which includes most of the Continental United States. "We expect some inconvenience on the part of the traveling public and we regret that. We will do whatever we can to assist carriers in the exchange of aircraft," said Broderick.

"We are hopeful that certification authorities can agree on a
* fix or fixes so that ATR aircraft can continue to operate under icing conditions," said Hinson.

National Transportation Safety Board Chairman Jim Hall stated

the same day, "I am pleased that the {FAA} has announced today its intent to adopt all of the recommendations made by the safety board in the wake of the Oct. 31 accident in Roselawn, Ind. While we await receipt of the FAA's formal airworthiness directive, today's action seems to address a major concern identified in the early phases of our ongoing investigation particularly the operations of

* ATR aircraft in icing conditions."

In a statement released shortly after the announcement, the Air Line Pilots Association said the following: "Based on the

information recently made available to the FAA and the NTSB by the

* ATR's manufacturer {sic}, the Air Line Pilots Association concurs with the measures announced today by the FAA. The public should not

* have any lingering doubts over the safety of the ATR. We will work

* closely with the FAA and the airlines to ensure that all ATR pilots are provided with the information they need to comply with the new

* FAA directive and safely operate their aircraft. ATR pilots should continue to exercise their command authority and avoid icing conditions."

In 1993, 107 ATR-42 and 29 ATR-72 aircraft were in revenue service in the United States, according to a report by Regional Airline Association, with the biggest operators being American Eagle and Continental Express. Eagle carrier Flagship Airlines flies 14 ATR-42s, Executive Airlines flies seven 42s and two 72s and Simmons flies 25 42s and 23 72s. Continental Express has 42 ATR-42s and two 72s in its fleet. Atlantic Southeast has 12 42s, Summit has four 42s, Trans States has eight 42s and three 72s, and TWExpress flies 11 42s.

"American is now probably scrambling to move ATRs down to Florida and Saabs up north. It's got to be very expensive," said Mike Boyd, president of Aviation Systems. "I hope we don't have a bad decision, because it will affect thousands of people, both passengers, airport officials and employees."

Executive News Svc.(\$)

APn 12/17 0303 American Eagle

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By ROSEMARIE BUCHANAN

Associated Press Writer

CHICAGO (AP) -- American Eagle was trying to allay safety concerns when it shifted aircraft and their crews from warmer climates to O'Hare International Airport. Then the newly transferred pilots balked, saying they were unsure of their cold-weather training.

The airline was forced to cancel Midwestern flights Friday for the second time in a week.

"It would be like taking a guy that learned to drive in the country and placing him immediately into New York City into bad weather," said Ralph Kolstadt, a spokesman for the Allied Pilots Association.

The suspended flights in and out of O'Hare affect 10 other Midwestern airports. Some of the airports were swamped with long lines at counters as passengers made alternate travel plans.

American Eagle had just resumed limited service at O'Hare on Thursday after grounding its ATR turboprops in cold weather Dec. 9.

Saab 340 turboprop pilots and planes had been temporarily reassigned to O'Hare and John F. Kennedy Airport in New York from warmer climates after safety questions were raised about the ATRs. American Eagle also canceled some of its flights at Kennedy, starting Friday.

Federal investigators suspect ice on the wings may have contributed to the Oct. 31 crash of an ATR-72 in Indiana that killed all 68 people aboard.

Gregg Overman, another APA spokesman, said the pilots were "highly trained and very competent" but "virtually none of them are properly trained or proficient in winter ice conditions."

Additionally, the pilots are unfamiliar with O'Hare, the world's busiest airport.

An American Airlines spokeswoman said the pilots had ample training.

"The pilots are trained to fly in all types of weather conditions, and they're certified to fly in all types of weather conditions," said Mary Frances Fagan.

The airline hopes to resume service Jan. 4 with pilots from American Eagle's other three pilot unions, Fagan said. Those pilots -- now in Miami, Raleigh, N.C., and Nashville, Tenn., -- have been trained to fly in icy conditions and have not raised concerns, she said.

APA President James G. Sovich said the majority of the pilots in his union have had no recent experience flying in winter weather. He said the only preparation was a 400-page insert in their flight manuals along with some information on how to navigate around O'Hare -- all handed to them Wednesday

night.

On Friday, an American Eagle commuter plane landed in Nashville, Tenn., with one of two engines out as it returned for maintenance following an emergency landing in Knoxville, Tenn., a day earlier.

Mechanics could not determine why the engine went out, said Don Bedwell, an American Eagle spokesman. The plane was the same model that crashed Tuesday near Raleigh, N.C., killing 15 of the 20 people aboard.

Only two crew members were aboard Friday; on Thursday there were six passengers.

Elsewhere, travel plans were also scrambled for some passengers of Kiwi International Air Lines. The company agreed Thursday to indefinitely suspend its 42 daily flights after the Federal Aviation Administration questioned the way it keeps records on pilot training. The FAA allowed one flight to take off Friday.

Also, at least 20 worried passengers canceled flights on Tower Air on Friday after the airline said someone cut electrical wires in five jumbo jets in one week last month at Kennedy.

The saboteur avoided vital systems and the vandalism was detected before the flights took off.

The suspended American Eagle flights at O'Hare affect travelers going to or from: Champaign and Peoria, Ill.; Fort Wayne and South Bend, Ind.; Columbus and Toledo, Ohio; Lansing and Traverse City, Mich.; and Green Bay and Madison, Wis.

ACCESS # FWST274706

HEADLINE Comment on pilot training prompts call for union leader to apologize

Byline: Scott Nishimura

Credit: Star-Telegram Writer

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Edition: FINAL AM

Section: NEWS

Page: 6

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- * FORT WORTH - Some American Eagle pilots are calling for an apology after the chief of AMR Corp.'s largest pilots union questioned last week whether certain Eagle pilots are adequately trained to fly in wintry conditions.

The comments by Allied Pilots Association President James Sovich prompted accusations yesterday from APA members - and the president of another labor group that also represents Eagle pilots - that Sovich is inappropriately using AMR's public relations crisis to his advantage.

"We are appalled by the (implication) that we are unsafe, inadequately trained, or less than the true professionals we all are," David Johnson, an APA union representative in North Carolina, told Sovich in a letter dated yesterday.

"We demand an immediate, open, public apology," Johnson said. He said his comments represent the consensus of 100 Eagle pilots and spouses who met in the Raleigh-Durham area Saturday night to discuss the issue.

- * The Arlington-based APA represents pilots at two of the four American Eagle commuter airline carriers, as well as the 9,000 pilots who fly for American Airlines. Eagle and American Airlines are both owned by AMR.

- * James Bishop, president of the Regional Airline Pilot Association in California, which also represents American Eagle pilots, said last night that there was "no factual basis" for Sovich's comments last week that some American Eagle pilots aren't adequately trained to fly in wintry weather.

- * "I know a lot about structural icing," he said. "The pilots at American Eagle are given the same training that pilots at American Airlines are given. There's no factual basis whatever for the suggestion."

Bishop suggested Sovich's real motivation for his comments rests with Sovich's attempt to get AMR to agree to classify all four Eagle carriers as one carrier for labor relations purposes. Three unions represent Eagle pilots, and if Eagle were classified as one carrier, Sovich's group might have an advantage in becoming the bargaining

group for Eagle's pilots, he said.

"Given the fact that there's no substantive reason for the statements (Sovich made), it must be that there's some other reason," Bishop said in an interview.

Sovich and a spokesman for the APA could not be reached for comment last night.

AMR spokesman John Hotard declined to comment last night on Sovich's remarks.

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NEWS

Release Date: December 9, 1994

Contact: Girard Steichen, assistant director of publications

FSF's Matthews Says Recent Reports Misrepresent Commercial Aviation Safety Record, Needlessly Alarm Public

Commercial air travel is indisputably the safest form of mass transportation available today, despite recent reports that question the industry's overall safety record, Flight Safety Foundation (FSF) president, chairman and CEO Stuart Matthews says.

"The flying public is being misled and needlessly alarmed by flawed press reports on aviation accidents and incidents, and hysterical accounts of the industry's performance," Matthews said.

Matthews, responding to some recent press reports and industry statements about aviation safety following recent fatal U.S. airline and commuter accidents, added: "No other industry has as much invested and as much at stake in safety as the aviation industry. Industry standards and performance are outstanding, which a close look at the record proves."

Recent U.S. fatal aircraft accidents, including a USAir Boeing 737 crash near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and the crash of an American Eagle ATR-72 commuter in Indiana, have brought intense media scrutiny on commercial air transport operations, government regulations and the industry's safety record. Much of that attention has centered on commuter operations that operate under less stringent federal regulations than large airlines, although safety questions have been raised about the industry as a whole, Matthews said.

The International Airline Passengers Association (IAPA) has urged airline passengers to avoid flying on commuter aircraft with 30 seats or fewer, saying that accident statistics indicate that these commuter aircraft "are the real hazard."

"Such comments are irresponsible, incorrect and counterproductive," Matthews said. IAPA provides rental car discounts and other services to its members. Accidental death insurance coverage must be purchased to join the organization.

— more —



Aviation Safety Record Misrepresentation

(continued)

The commuter industry's safety record has been skewed by the method used to categorize accident statistics, Matthews said. The commuter category has included hazardous operations such as "bush" flying in Alaska. Moreover, FAA statistics indicated that 15 percent of all commuter accidents involve training flights with no passengers.

The most recent full-year statistics compiled by the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) indicated that in 1993 the commuter accident rate (excluding Alaskan operations and helicopter operations) was 3.7 accidents per 1,000,000 departures, compared with 2.9 accidents per 1,000,000 departures for larger airlines (operating aircraft with more than 30 seats). While emphasizing that the accident rates were similar, Matthews noted that a single accident can distort such low statistics.

According to figures compiled by the Regional Airline Association (RAA), there was one fatal commuter accident involving intercity passenger service in 1993. During the same period, regional/commuter aircraft had 4.58 million departures, according to the RAA data.

The Indiana crash was the second fatal intercity regional/commuter crash this year, according to FAA statistics. Two accidents in the last two years were controlled-flight-into-terrain (CFIT) accidents [the flight crews were unaware of the impending collisions with terrain].

"More people are being shot every day, murdered with handguns in this country, than are being killed in a whole year on commercial aircraft," Matthews said.

The odds of being killed in a commercial air crash are 1 in 4.6 million. Statistics also show that passenger fatalities have declined significantly since 1970 and after industry deregulation.

Matthews' positions were echoed in recent FSF-initiated safety discussions with other industry and regulatory agency leaders

"Some of the recent [press] reports [about aviation accidents] have bordered on the irresponsible," said John Lauber, Ph.D., who is retiring as a member of the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) at the end of the year. "Some of the confusion about facts may be caused by reporters who do not understand the technical issues and others who fail to report objectively."

The NTSB has recommended that commuter flight crews receive the same level of training as pilots who fly for large airlines under more stringent U.S. Federal Aviation Regulations (FARs) Part 121 pilots, and has urged increased use of simulators, especially when new commuter aircraft are introduced. Crew rest issues and changes in the way many training flights are scheduled were also addressed by the NTSB. Many commuter training flights are currently scheduled at night when aircraft are available without passengers.

"The most important issue is training, training, training," Lauber said. "In the accidents that [do occur], most involve crew performance, crew proficiency and training-related things."

Aviation Safety Record Misrepresentation

(continued)

Matthews praised recent NTSB recommendations to require that commuter aircraft with 20 or more seats be operated under the same rules as Part 121 carriers. The NTSB also recommended that scheduled passenger service in aircraft with 10 seats to 19 seats be conducted under Part 121 or "its functional equivalent, wherever possible."

Lauber noted that the changes will likely have little effect on commuter accident rates in the long term because the rates are already exceptionally low.

"Given the safety record that we are starting with, the probability that you will actually end up saving [many] lives is pretty small," Lauber said. "In the long run, there may be a reduction in the accident rate, but it isn't going to be very large."

Matthews acknowledged that the industry must determine how to help commuter operators increase the use of simulators, which can be costly if crews need to travel to remote locations to use them or if an operator purchases a simulator for on-site use.

"We encourage the development of lower-cost, mobile simulators that could, on a shared resources basis, be moved to locations where training is needed," Matthews said.

Matthews and Lauber also praised the interaction between the NTSB, an independent government agency, and the FAA. The FAA has been criticized frequently for not adopting NTSB safety recommendations or moving too slowly on recommendations. The FAA recently agreed with the NTSB's recommendations for commuter operations and said that it would work quickly to adopt them.

"There's a creative tension built into the system," Lauber said. "Congress created an independent safety board that has the responsibility to issue recommendations, but does not have the charter or the responsibility to conduct cost-benefit analyses. It's our job to force the debate. If 100 percent of our recommendations were being adopted it would be an indication that we were not pushing hard enough."

Critics, for example, have charged that the FAA should have followed an NTSB recommendation to "prohibit the intentional operation of ATR-42 and ATR-72 airplanes in known or reported icing conditions." Instead, following the Indiana accident, the FAA issued new pilot operating procedures in icing conditions for the ATR aircraft. Pilots were advised not to use the autopilot in icing conditions and not to extend flaps when holding in such conditions. Both French-Italian manufactured aircraft models are designed and built for Part 121 operations.

"While some pilots have expressed concern about flying ATR aircraft, the FAA would not permit continuing operations of this aircraft if [the FAA] believed the aircraft was unsafe," said Linda Daschle, deputy FAA administrator, earlier this month.

Nevertheless, the FAA and the NTSB are continuing to examine the facts involving the ATR aircraft as more information develops in the Indiana accident investigation.

Aviation Safety Record Misrepresentation

(continued)

Public perceptions of these aircraft types are also often difficult to change, Matthews said, "When people see smaller airplanes on the evening television news, they are often led to believe that the aircraft are less sophisticated and less reliable than larger, jet aircraft when in fact many of these aircraft are more sophisticated and have more up-to-date equipment and design features than some of their older jet counterparts."

RAA President Walt Coleman added: "There are still a lot of people out there who see a propeller and don't realize that it's a jet [turboprop] engine [on a sophisticated current-technology aircraft]. They think it's an old airplane."

Matthews said that FSF has embarked on a campaign to reduce by 50 percent all airline accidents worldwide by 2010. FSF is in its third year of a global initiative to reduce CFIT accidents by 50 percent by 1996.

He added that next-generation technology, including global implementation of navigation technology such as the satellite-based global positioning system (GPS), will further enhance safety and help reduce accidents.

"These are refinements to an admirably safe system that we are all striving to improve," Matthews said.

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Flight Safety Foundation (FSF) is an international membership organization dedicated to improving flight safety. Nonprofit and independent, FSF was launched in 1945 in response to the aviation industry's need for a neutral clearinghouse to disseminate objective safety information, and for a credible and knowledgeable body that would identify threats to safety, analyze the problems and recommend practical solutions to them. Since its beginning, the Foundation has acted in the public interest to produce positive influence on aviation safety. Today, the Foundation provides leadership to more than 600 member organizations in 75 countries.

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NEWS

Release Date: Dec. 30, 1994

Contact: Girard Steichen, assistant director of publications

FSF's Matthews Says ATR Review Should Remain Focused on Technical, Safety Issues

The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA's) review of its restrictions on ATR aircraft, and any decisions growing out of that review, should be based on solid technical evidence and rooted solely in the interests of passenger and crew safety, says Flight Safety Foundation (FSF) President, Chairman and CEO Stuart Matthews.

"The ATR review should not be based on economic considerations nor should the issue be clouded by the statements and opinions of individuals or groups whose primary focus is selling insurance or providing some service other than ensuring safety," Matthews said.

Matthews has strongly criticized statements by the International Airline Passengers Association (IAPA) in recent weeks claiming that commuter aircraft and carriers are unsafe. IAPA requires the purchase of accidental death insurance as a condition of membership.

"Such statements are invariably based upon hearsay or preconceived notions that fit that organization's self-serving agenda," Matthews says. "The final determination on ATRs must come from aviation safety experts, based on their full and detailed examination of the facts."

The FAA earlier this month banned ATR aircraft from flying in icing conditions, after ice build-up emerged as a possible cause of the Oct. 31 crash of an American Eagle ATR-72 in Indiana. Extensive icing testing has been conducted since the FAA order, and the results of those tests are under review.

Flight Safety Foundation (FSF) is an international membership organization dedicated to improving flight safety. Nonprofit and independent, FSF was launched in 1945 in response to the aviation industry's need for a neutral clearinghouse to disseminate objective safety information, and for a credible and knowledgeable body that would identify threats to safety, analyze the problems and recommend practical solutions to them. Since its beginning, the Foundation has acted in the public interest to produce positive influence on aviation safety. Today, the Foundation provides leadership to more than 600 member organizations in 75 countries.

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W.S.J-B9-12/19/94

American Eagle Groundings Add to Fliers' Safety Fears

Union-Management Hostilities Were a Bigger Factor Than Icy Weather

By JAMES S. HIRSCH

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Bad weather often grounds planes, but now something else entirely has grounded American Eagle flights: bad labor relations.

That is disturbing enough, but American Eagle's decision on Friday to temporarily discontinue all Chicago and some New York commuter flights has done far more than disrupt the holiday plans of tens of thousands of travelers. It also has whipped up additional safety fears among increasingly nervous fliers.

Despite repeated assurances that air travel in the U.S. is quite safe, passenger confidence has been badly shaken by a dismaying series of events in recent months, including two fatal crashes involving American Eagle flights. In addition, three other fatal plane crashes this year, urgent government demands for safety audits of all U.S. carriers and reports of sabotage have further unnerved travelers.

Red-Alert Environment

Travel agents say clients are suddenly inquiring about aircraft models. Philadelphia businessmen are booking limousines to New York instead of flying. And even relatively common incidents, such as an American Eagle commuter flight landing at the Nashville Metropolitan Airport Friday with its right engine out, are widely reported across the country.

"Those things happen all the time, but now everyone is looking for them," says Michael Boyd, president of Aviation Sys-

tems Research Corp., a consulting firm in Golden, Colo.

This red-alert environment played a role in the grounding of American Eagle's flights out of Chicago's O'Hare International Airport — where it had 149 daily departures at its peak — and of 20 daily flights out of New York's Kennedy International Airport. In Chicago, American Eagle provided vital and sometimes exclusive air service to 32 Midwestern cities and delivered many passengers to O'Hare for connecting flights on American Airlines. American Eagle and American Airlines are independent subsidiaries of AMR Corp. in Fort Worth, Texas.

In New York Stock Exchange composite trading Friday, AMR rose 25 cents to \$50.625 a share.

American Eagle's showdown Friday had its roots in a mad scramble last week by the carrier to comply with a government directive, affecting the entire industry, to ground ATR-42 and ATR-72 commuter aircraft in icy weather. American Eagle in Chicago had to send 41 ATRs south and replace them with Saab 340s and the pilots who fly them.

Union-Management Hostilities

In public statements, American Eagle said it canceled its flights until Jan. 4 because of "unfounded allegations" by the Allied Pilots Association regarding the level of cold-weather training for Eagle pilots who were temporarily reassigned to Chicago and New York from three southern cities.

But icy runways had much less to do

with the Eagle shutdown than hostilities between the pilots union and management. APA represents two of the four commuter carriers, Flagship Airlines and Executive Airlines, that make up American Eagle, which was cobbled together through acquisitions in the 1980s by its parent company. Pilots at American Airlines are also part of APA, which represents a total of about 10,000 pilots at AMR.

The two other Eagle carriers, Simmons Airlines and Wings West, are represented by two other pilot unions. APA has long wanted to represent all Eagle pilots — giving APA more leverage — and last year

Division	Value
Air Transportation Group	\$3,370
	220
	333
Sabre Group	393
AMR Management Services Group	136

asked the National Mediation Board to declare Eagle a single carrier, which would permit a vote among pilots for a single union. A decision is pending.

"To the public, American Eagle is one carrier, but in reality it's four airlines," says Gregg Overman, a spokesman for APA. He accuses AMR management of leveraging the different Eagle unions against each other on issues like fur-

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The single-carrier issue was raised last week by representatives from APA and management when the two sides met to discuss Eagle's aircraft redeployment plan. The plan needed the union's blessing because it violated duty agreements in the contract.

According to two people familiar with the talks, APA representatives told the company Thursday that unless American Eagle agreed to integrate the four airlines, the union would advise its Chicago pilots not to fly.

Mr. Overman, the APA spokesman, confirms that the single-carrier issue was discussed but says he doesn't know the details of the talks or whether an ultimatum was issued. He deferred questions to APA President James G. Sovich, but efforts to reach him were unsuccessful.

Regardless, Mr. Overman ridicules as bogus American Eagle's contention that bad weather or pilot-training issues forced the shutdown. Indeed, aviation experts also say that if licensed pilots need extra training for cold-weather flights, they shouldn't be flying in the first place.

Mr. Overman says a scheduled meeting for Friday was to remove the last safety concerns for the reassigned pilots, and he says he has no idea why American Eagle canceled operations.

"We're talking about something that could have been done in a matter of hours," such as reviewing de-icing procedures and ground movement at O'Hare in the winter, Mr. Overman says. "We've highlighted the need for safety as paramount, but the reaction was in the form of a nuclear weapon when a .22 would have done nicely."

An American Eagle spokesman wouldn't comment on union discussions and restated the company's position: "The pilots said they need additional training, and we can't ignore that."

Felt It Had No Choice

But according to people familiar with the negotiations, American Eagle felt it had no choice but to shut down, a move that some analysts say will cost \$20 million. (AMR's annual revenue is close to \$16 billion.) American Eagle, which has long been considered one of the safer commuter airlines because of more rigorous training requirements, has seen its reputation badly damaged by the two fatal crashes of its planes in the past two months. It also suffered a rebuke when the Federal Aviation Administration forced the industry to remove ATR aircraft, a mainstay for Eagle in Chicago, from cold-weather climates. (An FAA official said yesterday that the ATR turboprop might be able to return to regular service "very soon.")

And just three weeks ago, several American Eagle pilots refused to fly ATR-72s out of O'Hare, citing unsafe weather conditions. Fourteen flights were canceled. The ATR-72 was the type of turboprop plane, flown by American Eagle, that crashed in Indiana in October, killing all 68 people aboard.

In the end, American Eagle canceled operations because it couldn't afford the reassigned pilots walking out, implying that management was taking heedless risks with safety.

"The S word," says one insider, prevailed.

For

Maria Puente

#: 713281 S4/SAFETY
09-Dec-94 00:08:32
Sb: #712814-#ATR-72 pilots walk out?
Fm: Robert Krzewinski/MI 70254,3334
To: Bart Barthelemy 73574,56 (X)

Concerning the alleged "walkout" by Simmons/American Eagle pilots it never happened. I should know as I was there the day the media reported the incident as happening. The morning of November 27th had pilots delaying flights at ORD due to concerns about weather but this is something that happens at any airline, almost every day of the year. To many in the media, however, pilots delaying flights does not sound very exciting, but a "revolt" (even if it never happened) does.

One further point. To my knowledge, there has not been even one case of a pilot at Simmons telling their union or management that they never want to fly the ATR again. The pilots of Simmons are safely flying the ATR aircraft, in strict accordance with FAA directives, and I hope that speaks for itself.

Captain (ATR) Bob Krzewinski,
Chairman, Simmons Master Executive Council,

Press <CR> for more:
Air Line Pilots Association

There is 1 Reply.

Press <CR> for next or type CHOICES !

French Authorities Decline Further Restrictions On ATR Aircraft

While Transport Canada joined the FAA in banning operation of ATR-42 and -72 aircraft into forecast icing conditions, DGAC of France, the lead certification agency for the aircraft, issued a terse statement saying it will not impose further restrictions. Several northern European countries also indicated they will not impose the stringent restrictions adopted last week by FAA (DAILY, Dec. 12). DGAC said that "in the absence of new facts, there is no reason to modify the restrictions," imposed Nov. 25, that bar use of the automatic pilot when an ice layer is observed on the aircraft. Reports from Europe indicated that the aviation authorities of Finland, Denmark and Czechoslovakia are siding with the French. Karair, a domestic subsidiary of Finair, operates six ATR-72s. Cimber Air of Denmark and Ccskoslovenske also indicated they will follow the French guidelines for operating the aircraft.

ATR said earlier that tests it conducted in Toulouse "provide no basis for the action taken by the FAA." The French-Italian company said it "retains full confidence in its aircraft's ability to operate safely in all weather, including icing conditions," as long as the precautions ordered earlier are followed. ATR also disputed reports that ice buildup on the wings could cause an uncontrollable roll. It said its tests "demonstrate only that a very specific and unlikely artificial shape, placed in a single, specific location, could disrupt airflow over the wing, causing a sudden roll. Specifically, the tests showed only that when a nine-foot section of one-inch wooden quarter-round molding was attached on the wing in front of the aileron on one wing, its flat side facing forward, an aileron deflection was created, thus inducing a roll. There is no evidence whatsoever that this particular shape of ice exists in nature, that it is likely to be encountered in flight, or that it could adhere to the wing surface at the precise location, or any other location, identified in the test." ATR said it placed 80 different artificial shapes on a model ATR wing and conducted hundreds of wind tunnel tests. "Aileron deflection was observed with only one shape, attached to the wing in one specific asymmetric location." ATR complained that Anthony Broderick, FAA associate administrator for regulation and certification, told reporters Dec. 9 that the simulated ice shape was "arbitrarily chosen," and that he said FAA has "no evidence this specific formation would occur" in nature. FAA has been working with the Joint Aviation Authorities of Europe to harmonize regulations on both sides of the Atlantic, and a European source questioned yesterday whether FAA's unilateral action on ATR aircraft will further this effort.



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MBA Aviation Oracle

International Airline Passenger Association Attacks Commuter Safety. The so-called "Association" is really a front for insurance companies trying to sell insurance to passengers. It has made full-time jobs for several people publishing highly sensationalized reports of allegedly unsafe conditions. The media loves it, and gives high profile dissemination to the "Association's" views. The latest victims are the 30-and-under seat commuter aircraft which are branded as being "ten times as dangerous" as jet airlines. If the statistics were slanted another way, based on passenger enplanements, the results would be entirely different, with small turbo-props being just as safe as jets. And also remember that you are 1000 times more likely to die in your bathtub, and just as likely to get kicked to death by a mule as to perish in a plane. Newspapers should charge the IAPA regular advertising rates for publishing their garbage. →