Boeing Executive Challenges Aviation Leaders to Accelerate Efforts to Transform the Air Traffic System

Hayhurst Calls on Aero Club of Washington to Take "Concerted Action" to Address the Challenges in Transforming the System

Despite the current downturn in air traffic, now is the time to intensify efforts to transform the air traffic system, a Boeing executive told aviation leaders today in a speech to the Aero Club of Washington.

"If we wait for congestion to return before designing, creating a transition plan for, and building the next-generation system, we will pay a heavy price," said John Hayhurst, president of Boeing Air Traffic Management.

Hayhurst commended the FAA, both for its leadership in increasing broader awareness of the need for system transformation and for its ongoing modernization efforts, including the establishment of a multi-agency Joint Planning and Development Office (JPDO). "The challenge now," Hayhurst continued, "is to turn that growing recognition into action. To truly transform the system, the "P" in JPDO needs to stand for program, not planning; the FAA and other government agencies need to allocate resources beyond just R&D funding for a new program in their budget requests; and Congress needs to turn authorizations into appropriations."

A network-enabled approach to the air system would provide a strong and flexible platform for system transformation. Such an approach would provide a common suite of information to system users. For instance, "pilots, controllers, meteorologists, airline operational personnel, military and security officials would all have common situational awareness because they would pull information from the same common information network. And they would have the ability to push information onto the network, ensuring rapid situational updates that everyone could see and use in their jobs, whether it's tactical separation, flow management, airline operations or system security, " according to Hayhurst.

"So partnerships are forming, people are rolling up their sleeves and collaborating to define the future, and progress is being made," said Hayhurst. "There are technological challenges to be sure. But the far bigger challenges are economic and cultural, which require strong leadership and political will, and can be met only with concerted action."

Boeing established its Air Traffic Management unit in November 2000 to dramatically improve air traffic systems throughout the world. Its aims are to make flying even safer and more secure, significantly reduce delays, congestion and environmental impact, keep aviation affordable and accessible for commercial, military, business and general aviation users, and enable seamless global aviation operations.

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