

SINGAPORE'S NEW SHOW

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The new exhibit hall's proximity to the static display area (bottom) was one of many improvements. Stratech's iFerret runway foreign object surveillance system (below) was ordered for Singapore's Changi Airport.

Questions about whether the new Singapore Airshow site, organizers and business climate would measure up to the standards set by the previous and now-departed "Asian Aerospace" show generally received positive responses from visitors to the 2008 event.

The newly constructed show facility and roads, set on reclaimed land developed on the eastern side of the island city-state, were vastly superior to the old site. Plenty of exhibit space, adjacent aircraft display areas, air conditioning that worked and well-planned roads made the physical act of attending and exhibiting much less arduous than before. The new organizers' efforts took care of most new-show kinks, as well.

However, coming on the heels of record orders booked last year at the Paris and Dubai air shows, the Singapore show was unlikely to compare well. While exhibitors announced US\$13 billion in sales of new aircraft, engine and support equipment, a number that would have been seen as fairly healthy in past years, that figure paled in comparison with the \$100 billion and \$75 billion logged at Paris and Dubai. However, the fact that many production lines are sold out so many years into the future made significant additional orders unlikely. Nonetheless, Lion Air stood out with its \$4.4 billion order for 56 more Boeing 737-900ERs, elevating its order book for that type to 178 airplanes.

There was a decided lack of airliners at the show. Just the Airbus A380 appeared at the

show, and it flew. The rest of the flying during the show's one-hour daily flying window was done by military solo and team efforts. However, corporate aviation was well represented in the static displays, as manufacturers didn't miss an opportunity to display in one of the fastest growing corporate aviation markets in the world.

Singapore also is where many international aerospace manufacturing and service companies are establishing or expanding their Asia/Pacific facilities, taking advantage of the national government's drive to expand aerospace in Singapore. During the show there were nine ceremonies marking facility groundbreakings, expansions or openings.

Lufthansa Technical Training joined the trend, opening a new training center at Temasek Polytechnic, joining other facilities in Tianjin, China, Haikou, China and Manila, Philippines. The demand for training in the region is skyrocketing due to aviation's growth, but that growth "is making it very difficult to hold onto" the trained people, said Ralph Kaeding, general manager of the training center. "When the more prosperous regions have a [personnel] need they take out the wallet and say, 'I need the people, what is the cost?'"

Kaeding told ASW there are cultural differences in the employee turnover problem: "Certain nationalities stay at a job for life." In other places, including the Philippines, Singapore and Indonesia, turnover "is difficult."

Despite new training facilities opening all the time in the Asia/Pacific region, "in some places with big growth they're not prepared for this." The Singapore maintenance, repair and overhaul cluster alone requires 1,000 newly trained people annually, Kaeding said.





The flying was closed each day by the Royal Australian Air Force Roulettes demonstration team flying Pilatus PC-9s.

Keith Tan, vice president and general manager of Goodrich Aerostructures Service Center—Asia in Singapore, said that even with the nation's system of polytechnic schools, “we need to do our own specialized training” to feed a Goodrich presence that has grown from 14 to 700 people in 10 years. The company, however, does not have a major turnover problem, he said, possibly because it sits at the top of the food chain. “Due to our people philosophy and a good incentive plan, very few people leave us. It’s all about how you treat your people, and we have a good reputation.”

Among the safety advances highlighted at the show was the first order for Stratech’s iFerret runway surveillance system that uses a line of cameras to visually inspect the runway, preventing foreign object damage. After a 15-month trial at Singapore’s Changi Airport, the system was ordered by the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore to monitor Changi’s two main runways. The iFerret system uses artificial intelligence to detect a new foreign object on the runway, alert operators and zoom for close inspection. An evaluation by the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is to be conducted starting this spring at Chicago O’Hare Airport, Stratech officials said.

Gulfstream announced its new Flight Operations Risk Management Service that will enable operators to conduct flight data monitoring programs, also known as flight operations quality assurance (FOQA), on all of its in-production aircraft, plus several aircraft no longer in production. While the Gulfstream program can supply full analysis services, using Austin Digital for that function, the system can support any FOQA program, a company official said.

Honeywell’s Integrated Primary Flight Display (IPFD) received its technical standard order approval from FAA the day before the show opened. The IPFD utilizes “digitized data base of worldwide terrain and obstacles to provide pilots a synthetic ‘3-dimensional, real-time, out the window’ representation of terrain and obstacles on an aircraft’s primary displays,” the company said. The system integrates existing flight deck information with head up display advanced symbology, generated from the enhanced ground proximity warning system terrain database and graphics generators. ●



The growth of corporate aviation in the Asia/Pacific area attracted business aircraft (above).

Airbus delivered its second A380 to Singapore Airlines days before its demonstration aircraft flew at the show (bottom).

