



SHIFTING Focus

As 2007 finishes up its run, we are celebrating the 60th anniversary of Flight Safety Foundation. Born as the aviation industry — fueled by recovering economies as a healthy dose of new technology was ramping up its postwar growth — the Foundation has kept itself positioned to provide critical help, developing safety solutions and information for the rapidly expanding community.

I'm still relatively new with the Foundation, but it quickly became clear that this organization is as forward-looking as most for-profit operations: In order to remain relevant, we must keep shifting our focus to the next biggest safety target.

Despite all of the good work that has been done reducing the risk of having an accident, and our satisfaction in a job well done, problems that have been with the industry since its inception remain unsolved.

Case in point is the FSF Runway Safety Initiative. Going into the effort, it seemed obvious that runway incursions would be the major focus. However, hiding in plain sight was a problem that day after day damages more aircraft and, in most years, inflicts more death and injury than incursions — the problem of runway excursions.

From the dawn of flight, aircraft have been departing runways in undesirable ways, and usually it's no big deal; jack up the airplane, change a tire or two and drag it back to the ramp. However, the large number of these events constitute, we now understand, a warning of a larger problem that can, and does, produce real accidents, sometimes fatal.

Some elements of the FSF *Approach and Landing Accident Reduction Tool Kit* also are useful in reducing excursions — a stabilized approach, for example — but the complete issue of figuring out how to stay on the runway, or even being able to calculate with confidence your chances of staying on a runway, has not been addressed as a coherent whole. And that is why the Foundation, with enthusiastic contributions from many major players in the aviation community, continues this obviously important effort.

While we remain engaged in developing risk reduction strategies for “traditional” types of problems like excursions, we also must address a whole new class of emerging threats that require different approaches, different tactics and a different organization.

How Flight Safety Foundation proposes to deal with these emerging threats can be found in the story by FSF

President and CEO William R. Voss, on p. 16.

The source of many of these new threats is, ironically, growth and prosperity. More and more airplanes are flying throughout the world, and the pains of rapid growth have been clearly defined by multiple fatal accidents in certain regions.

When Flight Safety Foundation was created, it focused its limited assets on reducing the risk of an accident in areas of the world where most aviation activity existed — North America and Europe. While the largest part of world aviation continues to occur on those continents, accidents there are now rare. It is time to devote more attention to those areas that need the most help, developing what is intended to be a worldwide network of people and associated organizations to achieve and maintain high safety standards.

William R. Voss's President's Message, usually seen on this page, will return next month.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J.A. Donoghue".

*J.A. Donoghue
Editor-in-Chief
AeroSafety World*