

JPDO NEWS

March 2008

A newsletter from the Joint Planning and Development Office

From 1500 K Street, NW

Reminder: The public review period is underway for the JPDO Integrated Work Plan Version 0.2. NextGen partner departments and agencies, industry, and stakeholders have until March 28 to provide comments. Please visit www.jpdo.gov to view and download the document.

The JPDO Board Members will meet on March 6 at the JPDO Headquarters in Washington, DC.

The Air Traffic Control Global 2008 Exhibition and Conference, the world's largest event for the air traffic control and management industry, will be held on March 11 - 13 in Amsterdam, Netherlands. JPDO Director Charles Leader will present along with other speakers from the aviation industry.

The NASA Airspace Systems Program is hosting a Technical Interchange Meeting on March 15 - 18. The forum will examine long-term research issues for NextGen on a variety of topics. For more information, please visit www.jpdo.gov.

The JPDO has developed an acronym list comprised of more than 1,000 of the most commonly used acronyms and abbreviations among the JPDO community. Please visit the "Library" at www.jpdo.gov and click on "JPDO Acronyms."

We welcome your input. Please send your comments to 9-AWA-ATO-JPDO-Partnership@faa.gov.

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FAA Signs Agreement with China on NextGen Cooperation

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) on Tuesday, February 20, signed a historic, commemorative Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Air Traffic Management Bureau (ATMB) of the General Administration of Civil Aviation of China. The agreement will allow the U.S. and the People's Republic of China to begin collaboration in earnest toward the harmonization of our future air traffic management systems.

The signing of the MOU at the fifth Joint Air Traffic Steering Group meeting formalized the already strong air traffic cooperative relationship, and officially established a NextGen Air Traffic Management Steering Group. The Group, co-chaired by JPDO Chief Architect Jay Merkle and ATMB Deputy Director General Lu XiaoPing, provides a forum for the FAA Air Traffic Organization,



Carey Fagan, Director, ATO Operations Planning International Office and Madame Lu XiaoPing, Deputy Director-General, China ATMB at the NextGen MOU signing.

ATMB, JPDO, and other key partners to achieve mutual understanding of each other's complete air traffic system requirements, needs and plans.

As one of the first efforts under this agreement, a FAA/JPDO team will travel to Chengdu, China, during the week of April 14 to conduct a workshop with key ATMB representatives. ✈️

Clear Skies Across the Atlantic – United States and European Union Open Skies Agreement

Beginning this month, the Open Skies Agreement, signed last April between the United States and the European Union, will go into effect.

"This agreement is ... a big step forward in international aviation," said Jacques Barrot, Vice President, Transport, European Commission. The agreement authorizes all U.S. and EU airlines to fly anywhere among the governments' member states.

According to the U.S. Department of State, the agreement will erect "a pro-growth, pro-competitive framework" for the airlines industry. Major airlines such as Virgin Atlantic, British Airways, and United have already indicated plans to invest heavily in their transatlantic routes.

Since the signing of the accord with the EU, the U.S. has signed a similar Open Skies Agreement with Australia for flights across the Pacific Ocean. ✈️

NextGen Industry and Government Partners Come Together to Solve Major Weather Challenges

“Weather accounts for 70 percent of flight delays and 21 percent of accidents,” said Ken Leonard, Director, FAA Aviation Weather Office, at the JPDO-sponsored, government-industry NextGen Conference on Integrating Weather, Airports and Air Navigation Services. “As much as two-thirds of weather-related delay is potentially avoidable,” according to REDAC’s Aviation Weather – Air Traffic Management Integration study (October 2007).

The conference drew more than 200 participants from government and industry. “In order to meet the future challenges, it is essential that all stakeholders are at the table so that we can find solutions that are both technologically feasible as well as operationally realistic,” said Nick Sabatini, FAA Associate Administrator for Aviation Safety.

Sabatini described the future system as one based on aircraft-centric operations, where an aircraft’s advanced onboard capabilities are used to enable precise four-dimensional navigation, improve surveillance, and permit aircraft to serve as information nodes in the system.

As nodes, aircraft will be collectors of “secure, timely, accurate, and easily understood weather information,” which will be used onboard for better decision-making. At the same time, aircraft will be disseminators of weather information “that will be used in real time to develop better forecasts and to illustrate current conditions to other users.”

Facilitators led topic-focused work groups to discuss what the aviation and weather communities should accomplish in terms of operational and technical actions to ensure synchronized integration of weather information into operational decision-support tools.

Work group discussions focused on the near term, which Jim May, president and CEO of the Air Transport Association, coined as “the now side of the Next Generation Air Transportation System.” He emphasized that airlines lose millions of dollars because of weather.

“Affordability is key,” agreed Phil Boyer, president of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, who emphasized that safety and “saving lives” should be the priority of all NextGen stakeholders.

Establishing a common weather information system will require “a huge cultural change,” cautioned Elizabeth Lynn Ray, government co-chair of the JPDO’s Air Navigation Services (ANS) Working Group.

Final work group recommendations were presented to a panel representing the JPDO, NOAA, FAA and NASA. Matt Fronczak, chief dispatcher for Delta Airlines, representing one of the groups, presenting their recommendations focusing on the 4-D Weather Cube, which will play a critical role in providing a common situational awareness regarding weather. The cube will fuse many sources of information together to develop better forecasts for a location (using latitude, longitude, and altitude) and add the element of time so users may be better informed on the likelihood of weather impacts on advanced decision-making. Fronczak also noted the importance of minimizing the interpretation of weather information, emphasizing readability and understandability of weather data from the users’ perspective for successful weather integration.



Work Group 4 discusses enabling super density operations in a breakout session at the weather conference.

Additional recommendations from groups called for simulations involving “all the major players” from industry and government to solve major challenges. Suggestions also called for further research, demonstrations, and simulations.

Conference goers said that they are eager to see their hard work realized. Bill Watts, former Turbulence Program manager for Delta Airlines, said the conference meant both good and bad news for the JPDO. While the conference was an overall success, he said industry will be anxious to see how their results are incorporated.

In closing, JPDO Director Charles Leader said that he was encouraged by the results. “Many suggestions and recommendations will bring greater clarity to not only the operational improvements, but the Concepts of Operations and how the concepts are implemented within the system.” He noted, “The next step will be to refine plans on the next level and begin to define specific demonstrations to move more rapidly into implementation and achieving the benefits of NextGen.”

Based on the plans, a standing committee will develop a road map for integrating weather into NextGen. The government-industry committee will be formed under the ANS Working Group in the upcoming months. ✈️

Please visit the “Library” at www.jpdo.gov for further information about the conference.