Next Generation Air Transportation System
Joint Planning and Development Office

JPDO News

April 2008 A newsletter from the Joint Planning and Development Office

From 1500 K Street, NW

On April 1-2, the National Research Council's Aeronautics and Space Engineering Board will hold a public workshop at the Beckman Conference Center in Irvine, CA, to assess the Integrated Work Plan (IWP) for the Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen). At the workshop, independent experts will provide input on the IWP, with emphasis on research and development aspects.

On April 3, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and National Chamber Foundation will hold the 7th Annual Aviation Summit, entitled "Aviation's New Flight Plan: Innovation, Adaptation, and Consolidation." Experts and high-level executives, such as JPDO Director Charles Leader, will provide input to aviation representatives, lawmakers, and policymakers on the future of aviation and the critical crossroads which the industry faces.

A NextGen workshop planned for the week of April 14 in the People's Republic of China. A FAA/JPDO team, including Jay Merkle, JPDO Chief Architect and co-chair of the U.S.-China NextGen Air Traffic Management Steering Group, will participate in the meeting.

The public comment period for the NextGen IWP Version 0.2 closed on March 28. On behalf of the JPDO, we thank you for your input. Comments are currently being adjudicated for release of Version 1.0 later this year.

David Kerr, who is the Director of the JPDO Partnership Management Division and currently on detail to the U.S. House of Representatives, won an award in the 2007 Virginia Press Association contest for his editorial columns appearing in the *Stafford County Sun*.

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

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Gap Analysis Workshops

A gap analysis kick-off meeting took place on March 13 in the boardroom at the Joint Planning and Development Office (JPDO). The discussion, led by JPDO Chief Architect Jay Merkle, included more than 30 representatives from the JPDO and its partner departments and agencies. Mr. Merkle said that the top priority of the gap analysis for budget years FY10 to FY14 is "to identify elements that we absolutely need funded by 2010."

The analysis is tailored to individual partner departments and agencies. In the case of NASA, budget resource requests are mapped to Research Focus Areas, the Research and Development Plan, and Operational Improvements in the Integrated Work Plan (IWP) framework. In the cases of DoD, DHS, and DOC, the mapping will occur between budget information submitted to the Portfolio Management Division and the IWP elements. Aspects such as timing and resources will also be considered.

The analysis will include agency workshops beginning the week of April 7. Another workshop will be held on April 22 on cross-agency issues, the majority of which involve NASA and FAA. Homework teams prepping for workshops, Mr. Merkle said, "will take a shot at a first order scrub of what's missing."

Participants of the gap analysis workshop will primarily be looking for two different types of "widows and orphans." A gap may either be (1) a budgeted investment or program in the agency's or department's plan but not represented in the IWP, or (2) an expected investment or program in the IWP but not represented in the agency's or department's plan.

An initial gap analysis has been conducted with the FAA and they are in the process of updating and validating existing results.

This process is exploratory, and likely to be carried out again next year, said Mr. Merkle. Upon releasing the IWP Version 1.0 this fall, the JPDO will update the results of the gap analysis. Closing the meeting, Mr. Merkle emphasized that "the gap analysis will not be punitive; it will be reasonable."

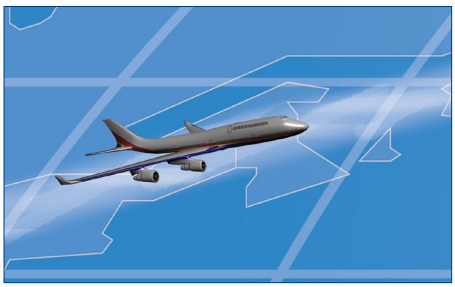
General conclusions of the analysis will be released to industry stakeholders as a base point for discussion.

Accelerating NextGen

As chair of the Senior Policy Committee (SPC), Secretary of Transportation Mary Peters tasked the Joint Planning and Development Office, at the January SPC meeting, to work with its partner departments and agencies to develop a proposed action plan that would accelerate implementation benefits of the Next Generation Air Transportation System.

The plan will address constraints and opportunities for achieving the accelerated implementation of NextGen in both the near- and mid-term.

After the action plan is approved, the intent is for the partner departments and agencies to start immediate implementation. The SPC is scheduled to reconvene on May 6.



NextGen in the Context of Major U.S. Historic Initiatives

While the Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen) represents a vastly complex and historic undertaking, it is by no means the country's first ambitious effort. Throughout its history, the United States has achieved and enjoyed the fruits of similarly significant, large-scale, nationwide efforts.

Some 200 years ago, despite opposition to the deal and its cost, President Thomas Jefferson orchestrated the Louisiana Purchase, which precipitated Lewis and Clark blazing a trail to the Pacific Ocean. Within half a century, President Abraham Lincoln would sign the Pacific Railway Acts -- land grants and government bonds which paved the way for the Transcontinental Railroad.

The groundwork for modern transportation as we know it today was established in the 1950s, when President Dwight D. Eisenhower promoted two seemingly revolutionary programs to advance America's public, private, and commercial interests: the Interstate Highway System, and the National Aeronautics and Space Act.

Mapping the Interstate Highway System

Federal funding of roads first began in 1916, with a nationwide highway system started in 1921 when the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR) had the Army identify roads considered necessary for national defense. In the late 1930s and early '40s, President Franklin D. Roosevelt commissioned several studies by the BPR regarding interregional expressways. Roosevelt's signing of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1944 called for a 40,000-mile National System of Interstate Highways to connect major cities and bolster national defense. Yet not until Eisenhower's 1956 signing of the Federal-Aid Highway Act did interstate highways effectively begin to meet the challenges of burgeoning travel and traffic nationwide.

Eisenhower's 1956 legislation mandated Federal fuel taxes for a Highway Trust Fund which paid 90 percent of interstate construction, with states paying the rest. Touted as "the greatest public works project ever," the Interstate Highway System earned its billing by enabling the country to become more mobile, less parochial, and far wealthier by the time Interstate 80, the U.S.'s first transcontinental superhighway, was completed in 1986.

Aviation and the National Aeronautics and Space Act

In 1958, Eisenhower signed the Federal Aviation Act and created the Federal Aviation Agency (which became the Federal Aviation Administration in 1967). That same year Eisenhower signed even more forward-thinking legislation with the National Aeronautics and Space Act, which established NASA just over a decade before man stepped on the moon.

An Aviation Simulation (AVSIM) of the Wright flyer by Steve "Bear" Cartwright

Progress in aviation had come quickly. NASA's predecessor, the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA) was founded a dozen years after Orville and Wilbur Wright's 1903 flight at Kitty Hawk, NC. In 1927, Charles Lindbergh's first nonstop flight between New York and Paris won him enough money and fame for a three-month, nationwide airplane tour to promote aviation's potential.

After plotting routes for PanAm throughout the early 1930s, Lindbergh eventually planned a 48-hour, transcontinental air/rail service connecting 10 cities between New York and Los Angeles.

Commercial aviation soon took off. From the late 1940s to the mid-1970s, annual revenue passenger miles increased nearly 40 times, from 3.3 billion to 130 billion. By 1988, after a decade of deregulation, the number of domestic revenue passenger miles had well more than doubled again, reaching 330 billion. A record 466 million passengers flew in 1990, with the total climbing to 745 million air passengers flying in 2006, according to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics.

Both by land and through air, returns on investment far surpassed original expectations and common imagination. Rewards remain ripe among technological, political, and social challenges in the 21st century.

Today, NextGen represents the next step along the nation's traditional path. As visionary as they were, neither Thomas Jefferson imagined that his grandchildren could ride a train to the Pacific Ocean, nor Charles Lindbergh that he would watch a man walk on the moon. NextGen represents progress to their legacy, one defined by American persistence that there are no dreams too large, no innovation unimaginable, and no frontiers beyond our reach.

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