

THE CHAIRMAN'S CORNER



Friday, June 11, 2004

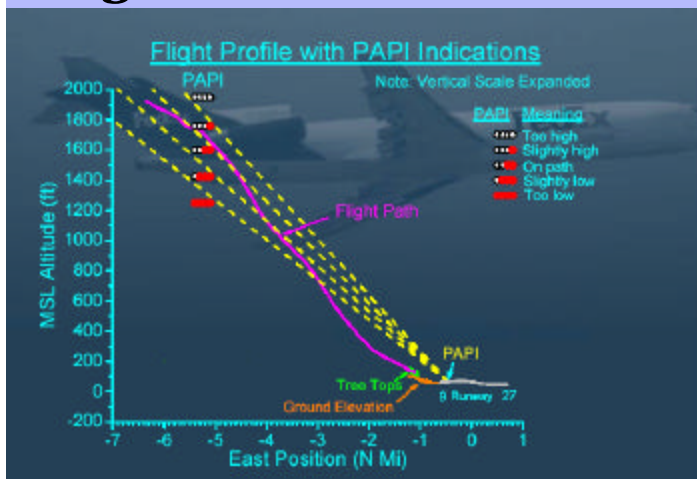
MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

As I watched the events surrounding the funeral of our 40th President, Ronald Wilson Reagan, I shared in the nation's sadness. No matter your age or stage in life, lessons can always be learned. During the National Day of Mourning and ceremonies last week, my thoughts led to the over 40,000 families who will also be faced with the loss of a loved one because of a transportation accident this year. All ceremonies of grief, whether held in private or on the national stage, have an impact on the family and friends involved, for each one is unique.

This is why it is such a privilege to work with the National Transportation Safety Board, as this agency seeks to create good out of tragedy. With each safety recommendation that we make, with each safety improvement, the safety bar is raised. The job and mission of the National Transportation Safety Board is to focus on safety in all modes and to reduce the number of deaths in transportation.

Ellen Engleman Conners

Fatigue, Color Vision Deficiencies Cited in Florida Crash



A profile view of the vertical flight path of FedEx flight 1478, which crashed in Tallahassee, Florida

The National Transportation Safety Board met in their Washington, DC headquarters on June 8th to discuss the findings of an investigation into the July 26, 2002 crash of a cargo aircraft in Tallahassee, Florida. FedEx flight 1478, a Boeing 727-232 (N497FE) struck trees on final approach to the Tallahassee Regional Airport at 5:37 a.m., after a flight from Memphis, Tennessee. The captain, first officer and flight engineer were seriously injured, and the airplane was destroyed by impact and resulting fire.

The Board determined that the probable cause of the accident was the failure of the captain and first officer to establish and maintain a proper glidepath during the night visual approach to landing. Contributing to the accident was a combination of the captain's and first officer's fatigue and failure to adhere to company flight procedures, the captain's and flight engineer's failure to monitor the approach, and the first officer's color vision deficiency.

This is the latest Safety Board investigation in which it has cited fatigue as a factor. Fatigue in transportation operations has been on the NTSB's list of most wanted safety recommendations since the inception of the list in 1990. Since that time, little progress has been made to revise the hours-of-service regulations that would incorporate the results of the latest research on fatigue and sleep issues.

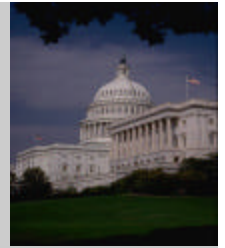
NTSB ALL HANDS MESSAGES



The Office of Personnel Management will be conducting an on-site operations audit of the NTSB's Human Resources (HR) program next week. The audit team will conduct group and individual interviews and meetings, and will review personnel records. The review will focus on HR flexibilities and the use of talent, performance, leadership and knowledge management. The goal of the audit is to ensure compliance with the merit system and identify improvements to increase efficiency and effectiveness.

On the Hill...

The NTSB was invited to testify on June 16th before the House Subcommittee on Highways Transit and Pipelines. **Bob Chipkevich**, Director of the Office of Railroad, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Investigations will testify on behalf of the NTSB. He will be discussing the status of safety recommendations to the Department of Transportation Research and Special Programs Administration's Office of Pipeline Safety.



Living Laboratory Aids in Accident Investigation



Investigators examine the wreckage of a Cessna 208 cargo plane at the NTSB Academy's laboratory.

For the first time, the NTSB Academy's Living Laboratory is being used in the investigation of an accident. The wreckage is from the October 23, 2002 crash of a Mid Atlantic Freight Cessna 208B (N76U) cargo airplane in a swamp near Spanish Fort, Alabama. Evidence that has been recovered was sent to the facility at the NTSB Academy in Ashburn, Virginia for a two-dimensional layout and detailed examination. Significant portions from all of the major structural components of the airplane, including the flight control surfaces have been recovered from the accident site.

The Living Laboratory is a 30,000 square foot, climate controlled facility, which allows investigators to examine accident wreckage without the hazards and harsh conditions normally encountered on-scene. Additionally, the proximity to the NTSB's Washington headquarters allows specialists to conduct more detailed examinations of evidence without having to travel to the accident site.

Administrator Rutter to Leave Post



The NTSB family wishes Administrator Allan Rutter a fond farewell as he leaves his post at the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). Under his leadership, a total of 24 NTSB safety recommendations have been closed acceptable. These include the areas of passenger car safety standards, track inspection and steam locomotive operations. Another half dozen safety recommendations were closed reconsidered. This is quite an accomplishment and the NTSB, and all those who aggressively pursue safety, are grateful.

We still have a ways to go and positive train control is still on our most wanted list. We hope that the FRA of the future will have an open and supportive mindset towards the importance of the NTSB recommendations, as well as our SWAT (Safety-With-A-Team) process wherein languishing safety recommendations are aggressively reviewed to seek resolution rather than delay.