

## THE CHAIRMAN'S CORNER



Friday, July 9, 2004

### MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

With summer halfway through, the NTSB mission continues in all modes. The Board recognizes the state of Tennessee for its recent passage of primary seatbelt legislation. Through these laws, Tennessee joins other progressive states in focusing on the prevention of the 43,000 national highway deaths each year.

Primary seatbelt legislation remains on the NTSB Most Wanted List and is a key focus for Board advocacy. The NTSB Most Wanted List highlights core safety issues and safety recommendations on both a federal and state level. NTSB Board Members -- Vice Chairman Mark Rosenker, Carol Carmody, Dick Healing, Debbie Hersman and I -- will be working hard in the coming year to support efforts for the

enactment of legislation that supports NTSB Most Wanted safety recommendations.

As you know, the NTSB has two core missions: investigation of significant accidents in all modes and advocacy of the ensuing safety recommendations. All five Board Members will continue to aggressively pursue safety through our advocacy of NTSB safety recommendations in all 50 states and the territories. We're pleased about the success in Tennessee for primary seat belt legislation and will continue to work to have this type of legislation adopted nationwide.

*Ellen Engleman Conners*

### Investigators Assist in Panama Crash

NTSB investigators are assisting the government of Panama in the investigation of the crash of a U.S. registered corporate jet on July 2nd. An Israeli Aircraft Industries Westwind model 1124, operated by Air Trek, Inc., lost control during takeoff and crashed into a building in Tocuman, Panama. All six persons on board the flight, and a seventh person on the ground, were killed. The Director General of Civil Aviation in Panama requested on-scene assistance by the NTSB, and Senior Air Safety Investigator (ASI) **Steve Demko** from the Northeast Regional Office, Parsippany, New Jersey, was assigned as the U.S. Accredited Representative. He is being assisted by an investigator with the FAA's Office of Accident Investigation, and the Director of Flight Operations of Air Trek, Inc.



NTSB Investigator Steve Demko (kneeling) with investigators from the Panamanian Civil Aviation Authority.

Investigators located the cockpit voice recorder (CVR) and shipped it to Washington, DC on July 4th, where it is being examined by **Jim Cash**, Chief of the Vehicle Recorders Division. Additional work will be performed on the CVR, and follow-up examinations of the cockpit annunciator panel and engines will be scheduled at a later date. **Tim Monville**, NTSB Senior ASI from the Southeast Regional Office in Miami, is retrieving the airplane maintenance records for review, and **Erik Grosf** of the Office of Transportation Disaster Assistance is assisting the operator with the personal effects of the four US citizens.

## NTSB ALL HANDS MESSAGES



### Academy Course Update

The NTSB Academy will be holding two courses in the next month. The first is *Transportation Disaster Response—A Course For Emergency Responders* from August 9-12th. The second is titled *Technical Photography* and will be held on August 13th. Courses are open to qualified individuals and may be taken in tandem. For more information, visit the website at: <http://www.nts.gov/Academy/academy.htm>

### On the Hill...

The NTSB's new outreach initiative to keep Members of Congress and staff informed of accident investigations and major publications by state and mode of transportation was successfully launched this week on Capitol Hill. **Cheryl McCullough, Byron Washington, Nicholas Worrell** and **Lauren Peduzzi** began delivering CD-ROMs to all Senate personal offices, and we will continue next week with Members of the House and Committee staff.



## Recorder Meeting Draws International Experts

The NTSB's Vehicle Recorder Division hosted an international meeting for government aviation accident recorder investigators recently at the NTSB's Washington, D.C. headquarters. The meeting was attended by 21 aviation flight data and cockpit voice recorder specialists representing government aviation recorder laboratories in Australia, Canada, Egypt, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Taiwan, the United Kingdom, the Ukraine and the United States. "These investigators represent the largest pool of experience in the handling of accident flight recorders in the world," noted **Vern Ellingstad**, Director of the Office of Research and Engineering.



Investigators listen as the Irish Air Accident Investigative Unit's Graham Liddy discusses Ireland's recorder investigation organization.

The purpose of the meeting, which was coordinated by **Anna Cushman** (RE-40), was to foster ongoing communication among aviation accident recorder experts and to share methodologies, troubleshoot problems, and identify solutions unique to the recorder portion of an aviation investigation. NTSB staff moderated each of the discussions and described techniques that have been successful in evaluating data and audio from damaged recorders. NTSB presentations included the retrieval of data from damaged memory boards (**Jim Cash**, RE-40), the problems of data latency (**John O'Callaghan**, RE-60), issues affecting data quality (**Cassy Johnson**, RE-40) and sampling rate issues on the Canadair Regional Jet (**Erin Gormley**, RE-40.)

## NTSB Releases Updates on Three Helicopter Crashes

This week, the NTSB updated the status of three recent helicopter accidents that killed eight and injured three. The updates include: the June 24th crash of a Bell 206-L1 that killed three when it impacted water in the Gulf of Mexico near Vermillion Bay, Louisiana; a June 26th accident involving a Bell 206B single-engine helicopter that killed two and injured three when it impacted the water following an in-flight collision with power lines while maneuvering near Cushing, Oklahoma; and the June 27th crash of a Robinson Helicopter R44 that killed three when it collided with trees in a residential area in Barnesville, Georgia during a cross-country flight. More information on these accidents can be found at: <http://www.nts.gov/Pressrel/2004/040707.htm>. You can automatically receive this and other Press Releases, as well as our Safety Recommendation Letters by signing up for the NTSB's E-mail Subscription Service.