

THE CHAIRMAN'S CORNER



Friday, September 10, 2004

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Wednesday, September 8th was the 10th anniversary of the crash of USAir 427 near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. This accident was one of the most technically challenging investigations in the NTSB's history. Ultimately, the NTSB determined that a flaw in the design of the aircraft's rudder was responsible for the accident. Another issue was the lack of a coordinated effort to help the families of the victims of that crash. The grass-roots efforts of families like these helped spawn the NTSB's Office of Transportation Disaster Assistance (TDA). Its mission is to integrate the resources of the federal government with those of local and state authorities and the airlines to meet the needs of aviation disaster victims and their families.



Investigators examine the wreckage of USAir flight 427 near Pittsburgh, PA.

We are also celebrating the first anniversary of the NTSB Academy. The idea for the Academy came in the wake of the crash of TWA 800 -- another very complex NTSB investigation. The long recovery effort and subsequent on-scene investigation stretched NTSB investigators and resources to their limits. The Academy's large laboratory now allows us to bring accident evidence to a protected and secure location where our investigators can work to determine the probable cause of a transportation



The reconstruction of TWA 800 at the NTSB Academy.

accident. The Academy also offers state-of-the-art classrooms and conference facilities to teach the next generation of investigators and provides a forum to discuss transportation safety initiatives.

And, finally, tomorrow marks the third anniversary of 9/11. We all remember that day, and I was proud to be part of the Department of Transportation team that helped secure our Nation's transportation system. We each have our individual memories of that day, and I urge everyone to take time to reflect tomorrow on the memory of those we lost, and of the work we have yet to do. As a Naval Reserve Officer, I am proud that the Pentagon has been rebuilt and continues to serve as a symbol of our Nation's strength. I note that air travel is back to the level it was prior to September 11, 2001. We have always been a Nation that is tough and resilient. We are a Nation that still wants to help those in need. And, in spite of all the tragedy of September 11th, we are still a Nation of hope. Like a seed that waits for a forest fire to release it, the strongest hopes for a civilization are forged in fire.

Ellen Engleman Conners

NTSB ALL HANDS MESSAGES



The National Transportation Safety Board will hold a public Board meeting Tuesday, September 14th, at 9:30 a.m., in its Washington, DC headquarters. The meeting will include a discussion of the NTSB's "Most Wanted List" of safety recommendations - a program that helps increase public awareness of safety issues that the Board feels are most vital to improving safety. During this meeting, the Board will discuss recommendations that are directed to the states.

On the Hill...

The Office of Government and Industry Affairs and the Office of the Chief Financial Officer delivered the NTSB's FY 2006 Budget Estimates to the Office of Management and Budget and the Congress on September 8th. The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee marked up the NTSB's FY 2005 Appropriations Bill on September 9th.



NTSB Academy Celebrates One Year of Success



Attendees at the Air Cargo Safety Forum listen to a presentation at the NTSB Academy.

The NTSB Academy in Ashburn, VA is celebrating its first year of delivering classes, forums and symposiums to investigators and safety leaders from around the world. The Academy has conducted 16 courses attended by nearly 700 people, including 120 NTSB staff. Students who enroll in classes at the Academy come from accident investigation agencies around the world. These include past as well as potential future parties to Safety Board investigations, such as equipment manufacturers and unions, disaster relief agencies and representatives from local, state and federal law enforcement agencies and the military. A total of 30 foreign countries were represented at Academy courses in 2004, including the Bahamas, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Korea, Lebanon, Mexico, Monaco, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Peru, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. This was twice the number of foreign countries hosted in 2003.

The NTSB Academy also hosted two public forums in 2004, with more than 200 people attending - one on Air Cargo Safety and one on Personal Flotation Devices in Recreational Boating.

NTSB Investigators Help NASA With Genesis Crash

The NTSB has been asked to assist NASA in the investigation of the crash of the Genesis space probe in Dugway, UT. The probe was returning from a two-year mission to collect particles from the sun on Wednesday, when the descent parachute failed to open after reentry. NTSB Aerospace Structures Engineer **Clint Crookshanks** is traveling to Utah to assist the NASA investigative team. Clint was also involved in the investigation of the space shuttle Columbia accident, which was lost during reentry in February 2003.



The Genesis crash site.