



## THE CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Friday, December 10, 2004

### MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

One of the elements that makes the National Transportation Safety Board so successful in our investigations and the implementation of our recommendations is cooperation with our safety partners. That was evidenced this week by several events that demonstrated these relationships.

The NTSB worked with the U.S. Coast Guard in the investigation into the break-up of a bulk freighter that grounded off the coast of Alaska, and the crash of a Coast Guard helicopter sent to rescue the crew. A Memorandum of Understanding between the Board and the Coast Guard helped establish responsibilities and roles during both investigations in Alaska.

At the Managing and Directing Safety Investigations course, the NTSB continued its strong relationship with NASA by sharing our best works with their newly formed Engineering & Safety Center. And partnerships with foreign safety agencies was also seen in the work that the NTSB's Recorder Lab is doing by providing readouts of aviation recorders from four international airplane crashes.

The partnerships we have developed with these and the many other agencies and entities are essential tools in our pursuit of safety in all modes.

*Ellen Engleman Conners*

### NTSB Launches Team to Alaska Ship Grounding



The *Selendang Ayu* anchored near Unalaska Island prior to breaking up. (USCG Photo)

The National Transportation Safety Board Office of Marine Safety launched a team of investigators to Unalaska Island, Alaska on December 9th to the grounding of a 738-foot bulk freighter. The Malaysian flagged motor vessel *Selendang Ayu* was carrying a cargo of soybeans from Washington State to China when, on December 6th, it began experiencing engine trouble. The ship later grounded, and then broke up in 15-foot seas and 30 knot winds. During the evacuation of the ship's crew, a U.S. Coast Guard HH-60 "Jayhawk" helicopter from Air Station Kodiak crashed in the water near Skan Bay on the north shore of Unalaska Island. Three Coast Guard helicopter crewmen and one crew from the freighter were rescued, but six freighter crew remain missing.

**Robbie Jones** is leading a team of three to Dutch Harbor, AK, for the NTSB's investigation of the *Selendang Ayu* accident. Aviation investigator **Jim LaBelle** from the Anchorage Regional Office is staking down the marine portion of the incident, and **Scott Erickson** will be acting as an Adjunct Member (observer) of the Coast Guard's investigation into the crash of the HH-60 rescue helicopter.



The wreckage of an HH-60 *Jayhawk* helicopter in Alaska. (USCG Photo)

## NTSB ALL HANDS MESSAGES

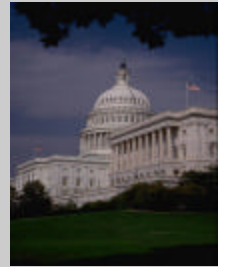


### Holiday Reminder

The Ethics in Government Act provides guidelines and limitations for gift giving and receiving. While the exchange of gifts during the holidays is not prohibited, it is important for employees to understand these guidelines in order to remain within the limitations dictated by the Office of Government Ethics. Further information is available through a recent gift guide e-mail from the NTSB's Designated Agency Ethics Official.

### On the Hill...

President Bush signed the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2005 on December 8th, which included the NTSB's appropriation mark for 2005. The conferees agreed to provide \$76.7 for Salaries and Expenses; however, also included an across-the-board recission of .80%, giving the Board a final enacted level of \$76.086. The 108th Congress adjourned sine die December 8th and will return January 4th to officially begin the 109th Congress.



## NTSB Successfully Trains NASA Managers



**Dr. Vem Ellingstad**, Director of the NTSB's Office of Research and Engineering, discusses data control issues.

This week, the NTSB conducted training for managers from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Engineering and Safety Center (NESC) at the NTSB Academy in Ashburn, Virginia. The week-long course, titled Managing and Directing Safety Investigations, was developed by the NTSB's Education and Training Manager **Don Chupp** in conjunction with former NTSB investigator **Greg Phillips**, and included modules by the Offices of Aviation Safety, Research and Engineering, General Council, Public Affairs and Transportation Disaster Assistance. **Tom Haueter** discussed the USAir 427 crash, and **Bob Benz** presented the TWA 800 accident as case studies of major accident investigations for the group.

The NESC was developed in October 2003 and, under director **Ralph Roe**, provides a central location to coordinate and conduct robust, independent engineering and safety assessments across NASA. The 44 members of the NESC who attended the course will be tasked with investigating significant mishaps at NASA.

## Recorder Lab Concludes Busy Week

The NTSB's Recorder Lab received 11 aviation recorders from around the world as a result of seven accidents or incidents this week. The lab, part of the Office of Research and Engineering, completed a state-of-the-art equipment upgrade earlier this year that allows the NTSB the ability to read the majority of Flight Data Recorders (FDR) and Cockpit Voice Recorders (CVR). The lab is conducting preliminary readings on:

- The FDR and CVR from an MD-82 accident in Indonesia.
- FDRs from DC-9 and B-737 accidents in Indonesia.
- The FDRs and CVRs from two Gulfstream IVs that ran off runways in New Jersey and Colorado.
- The CVR from a Falcon 20 that departed a runway in Pine Bluff, Arkansas.
- A VHS videotape from a Beech T-34B that crashed in Texas.
- A CVR from a CASA-212 contracted by the U.S. military that crashed in Afghanistan.