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Cessna marks 30th anniversary of Caravan utility aircraft



Cessna Aircraft Company, a subsidiary of Textron Aviation Inc., a Textron Inc. (NYSE:TXT) company, this week during the Sun 'n Fun International Fly-In and Expo is kicking off a celebration of the 30th anniversary of initial deliveries of its Caravan 208 single-engine utility turboprop.

"Three decades after entering into service, the Cessna Caravan still defines the modern single-engine utility segment," said Christi Tannahill, senior vice president, Turboprop Aircraft and Interior Design. "We continue our robust investments in the Caravan family based on customer needs, with the latest being the Grand Caravan EX."

Conceived as a rugged utility aircraft with low operating costs, the Caravan was designed for use in remote areas with extreme weather changes, mountainous terrain and rough landing conditions. As the aircraft's versatility became renown in all corners of the world, the Caravan began to see wide use in global markets by a variety of customers, including government agencies, law enforcement and militaries, air ambulance operators, freight haulers, corporations and humanitarian organizations.

The first Caravan was delivered on Feb. 25, 1985, to an air service provider in Alaska, and the next day Federal Express (now FedEx) took delivery of its first Caravan, which included a belly cargo pod and other modifications specially designed for the express delivery pioneer. Today, FedEx, through contracts with Part 135 operators, makes use of about 240 Caravans reporting a dispatch reliability rate in the 99th percentile.

Later this year, the company expects to deliver its 2,500th Caravan, and the fleet is now certified in 100 countries with more than 13 million flight hours amassed. The Caravan's unique combination of power, range, versatility and short field performance make it ideal for a wide range of missions, while its simplicity and durability make it the first choice for operators needing dependable air transportation. Throughout the years, the versatile design has helped businesses expand globally while remaining the reliable and rugged workhorse for which it was designed.

Cessna currently offers four Caravan models: the Caravan, the Grand Caravan EX, the Caravan Amphibian and the Grand Caravan EX Amphibian. The Grand Caravan EX features a Pratt & Whitney Canada PT6A-140 engine rated at 867 horsepower to give the upgraded model a 38 percent improvement over the rate of climb of the previous Grand Caravan model, a 350-foot reduction in takeoff roll and a 10-12 knot cruise speed improvement on average.

Cessna Caravan program milestones

- 1981 Cessna launched the Caravan program
- 1982 First flight of Caravan 208 prototype
- 1984 Caravan 208 received FAA type certification
- 1985 Cessna began deliveries of the Caravan 208
- 1985 Caravan 208 approved for amphibious floats
- 1986 Caravan 208B Super Cargomaster, stretched by four feet in a freight specific configuration, received FAA type certification

- 1990 First production Grand Caravan 208B delivered
- 1998 Delivery of 1,000th production Caravan 208
- 1998 Cessna began deliveries of the new standard Caravan 208, a Caravan 208 that features a Pratt & Whitney Canada PT6A-114A engine rated at 675 horsepower
- 2002 Delivery of 1,000th Grand Caravan 208B
- 2003 Oasis executive interior option offered
- 2005 Delivery of 1,500th production Cessna 208
- 2008 Garmin G1000 becomes standard avionics equipment
- 2008 TKS ice protection offered as optional
- 2012 Cessna and China Aviation Industry General Aircraft Company Ltd., (CAIGA) announce joint venture to conduct final assembly of Caravans in China for the Chinese market
- 2013 Cessna began deliveries of Grand Caravan EX, featuring a Pratt & Whitney Canada PT6A-140 engine rated at 867 horsepower
- 2013 Grand Caravan EX Amphibian received FAA type certification, deliveries commence

Web page: Cessna.com/Caravan

Caravan Image One

Caravan Image Two

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