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Revolutionary Beechcraft Premier IA Sets Another Speed Record



Legendary astronaut Robert “Hoot” Gibson highlights EBACE opening with speed record flight

The Beechcraft Premier IA continues to set records and firmly keep its reign as the world’s fastest single-pilot business jet. The Premier IA’s most recent record was established on May 10 leading into this year’s European Business Aviation Convention and Exhibition (EBACE) in Geneva, Switzerland. With legendary astronaut Robert “Hoot” Gibson at the controls, the Premier IA completed a 627-statute mile (1009 km) trip from Hawker Beechcraft Corporation’s (HBC) International Headquarters in Chester, U.K. to Geneva in 1 hour, 13 minutes, 30 seconds. Gibson blazed the course with an average speed of 511.9-mph (823.8 kph).

“As was proven again this week, there is no competition for the speed of the Premier IA,” said Brad Hatt, president, Hawker Beechcraft Commercial Aircraft. “In addition to its speed, the Premier IA is popular in Europe and around the world for its efficiency and medium-jet sized cabin that is available at a light jet cost. Time is money and the Premier fulfills both through its speed and efficiency.”

With Gibson at the controls and aircraft owner Robert Kay of the United Kingdom alongside, the Premier IA’s speed record highlighted the beginning of the week-long Hawker Beechcraft EBACE event. HBC pilot Aaron Comber accompanied Gibson and Kay on the flight.

HBC submitted the trip statistics to the National Aeronautic Association (NAA) – the national authority for overseeing and certifying aviation records – in the category Class C-I.E (6,164-13,228 lbs.) Group III (jet engine). The flight details will be confirmed in the coming weeks by the NAA. “I like to call the Premier IA a baby rocket ship,” Gibson said. “Its speed and handling qualities are exceptional. It is the type of aircraft that pilots love to fly. Our thanks to Robert for allowing the use of his aircraft for this speed record flight.”

Speed records are nothing new to Gibson and the Beechcraft Premier. In 2004, he broke two records previously held by a Cessna Citation when he flew a Premier I from Seattle, Wash., to Las Vegas, Nev., covering the 866-statute mile trip in 1:44:09. He followed that with another record trip from Las Vegas to Wichita, Kan., completing the 995-statute mile distance in 1:49:12.

The Premier IA, on display at EBACE, delivers the performance and capabilities of a much larger jet while providing the economy and efficiency normally found in light jets. It has the largest cabin in its class – at nearly 30 percent larger than what you find in its nearest competitor. As the first and only composite fuselage light jet on the market, the Premier IA’s composite structure has unprecedented structural strength, efficiency and extremely high resistance to fatigue and corrosion. Its fully integrated state-of-the-art avionics suite combined with the quietest cabin in its class and lowest operating cost make the Premier IA the best value light jet on the market.

A mock-up of the new Premier – the Premier II – is also on display at HBC’s EBACE exhibit. Hoot Gibson will be on hand throughout the show to tout the Premier IA and Premier II.

Hawker Beechcraft Corporation is a world-leading manufacturer of business, special mission and trainer aircraft – designing, marketing and supporting aviation products and services for businesses, governments and individuals worldwide. The company’s headquarters and major facilities are located in Wichita, Kan., with operations in Salina, Kan.; Little Rock, Ark.; Chester, England, U.K.; and Chihuahua, Mexico. The company leads the industry with a global network of more than 100 factory-owned and authorized service centers. For more information, visit www.hawkerbeechcraft.com.

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