

Momentum builds for Cessna SkyCourier program as certification flight test begins



WICHITA, Kan. (March 25, 2021) – The Cessna SkyCourier turboprop continues to surpass significant milestones as it begins the certification flight test phase of the program for the high-wing, large utility aircraft. Each major achievement has allowed the members of the flight test program a better understanding of the aircraft’s strength, capability and durability.

The Cessna SkyCourier aircraft is designed and manufactured by Textron Aviation Inc., a Textron Inc. (NYSE:TXT) company.

The fleet of three flight test aircraft has now completed more than 700 flight test hours, and the program continues toward FAA certification and first deliveries later this year.

Since the third aircraft joined the flight test program in late 2020, the Cessna SkyCourier team has gained momentum through several substantial accomplishments that include:

- Envelope expansion to all comers of the speed, altitude, and structural design.
- Extreme hot and cold weather testing, ensuring aircraft systems are functional and operational at extreme temperatures.
- Bird strike testing, which included eight separate tests over a two-month period, to demonstrate the impact resistance of the windshield glass and surrounding structure.
- Certification of the Pratt & Whitney Canada PT6A-65SC engine through Transport Canada Civil Aviation (TCCA), with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) certification expected soon.
- Natural icing certification, demonstrating the aircraft's ability to operate in actual icing conditions.

“The SkyCourier was designed to fulfill a need in the marketplace for a flexible, reliable, high-utilization aircraft for customers around the world, and its versatility makes it a great fit for a wide range of operations,” said Chris Hearne, senior vice president, Engineering & Programs. “The aircraft has performed exceptionally well through every phase of testing, and we’re pleased by its progress. With the start of certification flight test phase, we are entering one of the most important phases of the SkyCourier program, and I’m confident in our highly skilled team and the outstanding abilities of this aircraft.”

Program accomplishments

Production final assembly for the SkyCourier begins this month on the company's east campus in Wichita. State-of-the-art tooling, including high-speed machining, has been developed for the aircraft's assembly. “We’re excited to manufacture another revolutionary product for our customers,” said Brad White, senior vice president, Operations. “Everything with the Cessna SkyCourier tooling is brand new and designed and produced in house. Our production team has made final preparations to the process, focusing on every step to ensure assembly is completed with great efficiency and excellent quality.”

Relentless capability

The Cessna SkyCourier aircraft will be offered in two configurations including a 6,000-pound payload capable freighter and a 19-seat passenger version, all based on the common platform. The Cessna SkyCourier aircraft will deliver a combination of robust performance and lower operating costs. The aircraft will include single-point pressure refueling as standard to enable faster turnarounds. The aircraft features the popular Garmin G1000 NXi avionics suite and offers highlights such as a maximum cruise speed of up to 200 ktas and a maximum range of 900 nm.

Images:



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