

TEXTRON AVIATION AND MERLIN INTRODUCE CESSNA SKYCOURIER UX CONCEPT AIRCRAFT

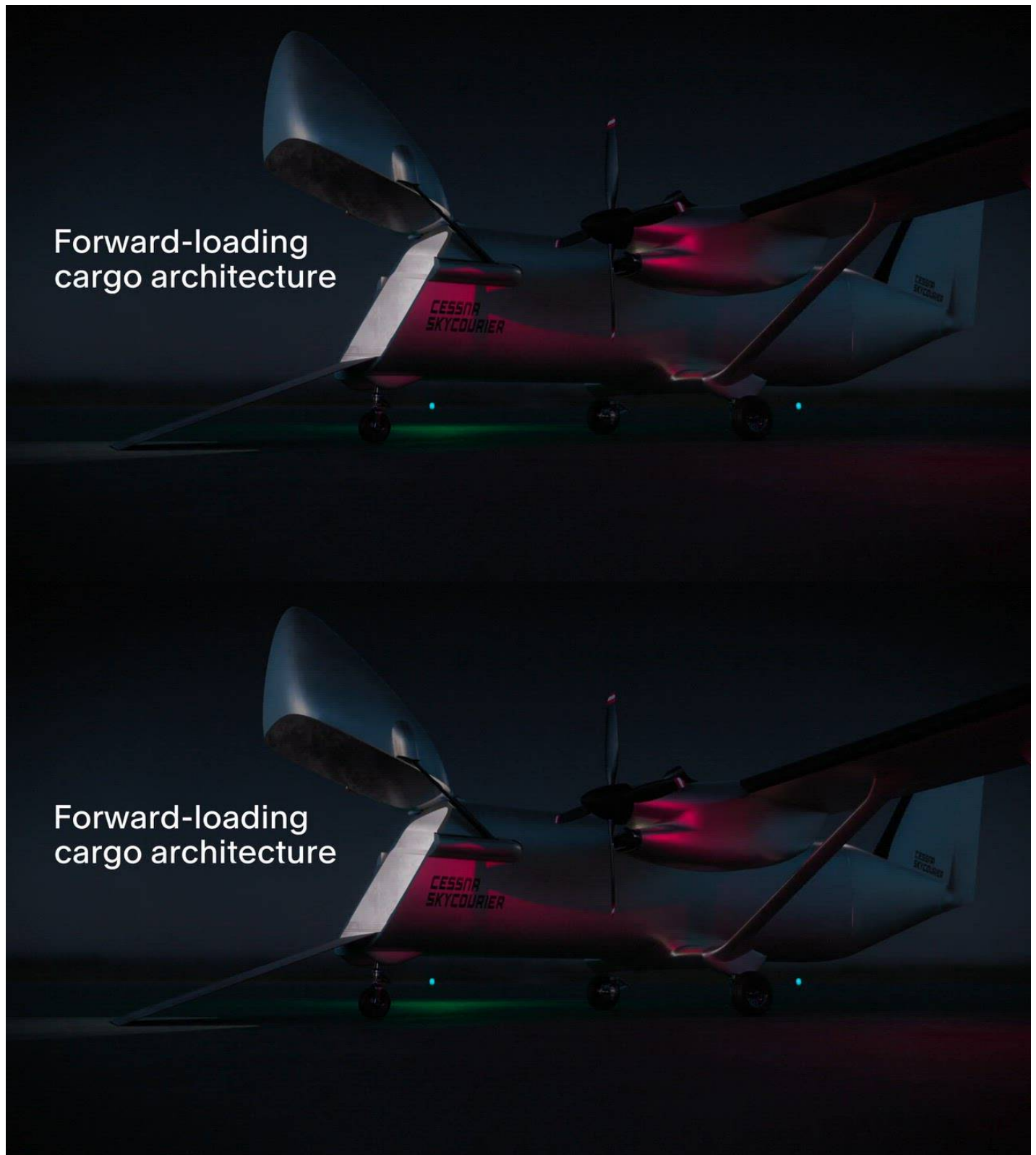
Concept pairs FAA-certified Cessna SkyCourier with Merlin Pilot autonomy to explore a scalable, autonomous approach to sustaining dispersed forces when traditional logistics routes are constrained or unavailable.



NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. (Sept. 14, 2026) – Textron Aviation Inc., a Textron Inc. (NYSE: TXT) company, and Merlin, Inc. today introduced a concept Cessna SkyCourier UX™ aircraft that combines Textron Aviation’s proven Cessna SkyCourier platform with Merlin’s aircraft-agnostic software solution for autonomous aviation. Revealed at the Air, Space & Cyber Conference, the concept explores a new cost-efficient and scalable approach to addressing logistical challenges with supplying forces dispersed across contested operational environments when traditional supply routes are constrained, vulnerable or otherwise unavailable.

“Military planners are increasingly focused on how to sustain forces across distributed and contested operational environments,” said Bob Gibbs, vice president, Defense and Special Mission Sales. “The Cessna SkyCourier UX concept reflects our commitment to examining

practical solutions to real-world mission challenges by leveraging real, certified products with innovative adaptation."



Addressing Evolving Sustainment Requirements

Introduced at the Air & Space Forces Association's Air, Space & Cyber Conference, SkyCourier UX responds to growing military interest in sustaining forces operating from dispersed locations across increasingly complex operational environments. Built on the twin-engine turboprop Cessna SkyCourier platform, the aircraft concept is designed to provide an additional option for transporting cargo and critical supplies across the final leg of distribution networks.



Defense organizations worldwide are evaluating new approaches to logistics resilience as forces operate farther from traditional supply hubs and adversaries gain greater ability to disrupt established transportation routes. Interest in contested logistics continues to grow as defense organizations evaluate how to sustain dispersed forces operating from austere locations and across extended distances. Recent experimentation involving autonomous and pilot-optional cargo aircraft, combined with investments in autonomous resupply programs, highlights increasing attention on logistics resilience and distributed sustainment.

The SkyCourier UX concept explores how a medium-payload, fixed-wing aircraft with the ability to fly autonomously could help address logistics requirements through right-sized lift, offering commanders additional options while adding flexibility and preserving the force's core mobility fleet. Designed to support cargo movement within a theater of

operations, and with the ability to take off and land on unimproved runways, the SkyCourier UX could provide an option for sustaining operations when access becomes challenged.



Filling the Gap Between Drones and Airlifters

The Cessna SkyCourier UX aircraft concept is designed to occupy a space between small tactical cargo drones and large military transport aircraft. Not every logistics mission requires a large airlifter, and many autonomous cargo systems lack the payload capability required for operational sustainment missions. Leveraging the capabilities of the Cessna SkyCourier platform, the UX concept offers fully autonomous takeoff and landing alongside meaningful payload capacity, short-field performance and the flexibility needed to support intra-theater distribution and expeditionary operations.



Beyond autonomous flight operations, the concept explores how the absence of an onboard crew could enable new cargo aircraft configurations optimized for logistics missions. Design concepts under evaluation include a forward-loading cargo architecture that replaces traditional cockpit volume with additional cargo space and provides direct access through a large nose opening. Combined with aircraft kneeling capability and integrated loading systems, these concepts are intended to improve cargo accessibility, maximize usable volume and support efficient operations from austere locations.

"The future of contested logistics needs more capacity and access to places we wouldn't risk a crew," said Matt George, CEO and founder of Merlin. "Merlin Pilot™ has already flown hundreds of autonomous flights on Cessna Caravans, Beechcraft King Airs and other aircraft. This concept pairs it with a proven platform, the Cessna SkyCourier, to explore what an aircraft could look like when it's designed around autonomy and cargo instead of a crew. Solving contested logistics today takes proven autonomy and a proven airframe."

Ongoing work by Merlin will include engineering studies and evaluations aimed at building confidence in autonomous and pilot-optional resupply operations.



“By pairing a proven aircraft platform with autonomy technology, we're exploring new approaches to contested logistics operations while also examining how autonomy may enable more efficient cargo aircraft designs that increase usable volume, improve cargo accessibility and support mission sustainment requirements,” said Gibbs.

Leveraging a Proven Aircraft Foundation

Because it is based on an FAA-certified aircraft already in production, the platform benefits from an established manufacturing system, global support network and mature sustainment infrastructure. These advantages provide a practical foundation for evaluating future autonomous and pilot-optional logistics capabilities while leveraging existing aerospace infrastructure and industrial capacity to deliver at scale for the warfighter.



Based on current design objectives, the Cessna SkyCourier UX light lift aircraft would be capable of carrying approximately 6,000 pounds of payload, accommodating up to three LD3 cargo containers and operating from austere runways. Potential applications include hub-to-spoke distribution, sustainment of expeditionary bases, transportation of mission-critical repair parts, delivery of medical supplies and support for island and remote-airfield operations.

A model of the Cessna SkyCourier UX concept will be showcased publicly for the first time at the Air, Space & Cyber Conference, Booth #235.

About Textron Aviation

About Textron Aviation Inc.

We have been inspiring the journey of flight for nearly 100 years. Textron Aviation Inc., a Textron Inc. company, has empowered our collective talent across the Beechcraft, Cessna, Hawker and Pipistrel brands to design and deliver the best aviation experience for our customers. With a range that includes everything from business jets, turboprops, light and high-performance pistons, to special mission, military trainer and defense aircraft, Textron Aviation has the most versatile and comprehensive aviation product portfolio in the world and a workforce that has produced more than half of all general aviation aircraft worldwide. Customers in more than 170 countries rely on our legendary performance, reliability and versatility, along with our trusted global customer service network, for affordable, productive and flexible flight. For more information, visit www.txtav.com.

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