

Preparing For The NBAA China Forum

At this year's 2011 NBAA Convention in Las Vegas, I was very proud to have been asked with my presenting partner - Jeff Lee of American Express - to develop and moderate the 'Opportunities for Business Aviation in China/Asia Conference'. This was our third year to host this event and it seems each year the topic becomes hotter. With NBAA announcing ABACE: Shanghai 2012, the focus on this region has never been greater.

Forums like this take a certain recipe for success: a hot topic, great panelists and an audience thirsty to learn. The China Forum contained all of the necessary ingredients.

Over this last year, I have received many calls from large multi-national corporations based in the United States asking me how to begin delivering their corporate executives and product support teams safely into this region? Of course they all understood commercial air travel for the long trip overseas could certainly be one component, but they also wanted to know what alternatives existed for intra-China travel.

Clearly when thinking of Business Aviation as a travel solution, one must consider looking outside of their own corporate airplane to best meet their travel needs. The Asian region is no different. Often the conversation moves to the availability for charter, fractional-type lift and basing aircraft - or whether the enquirer should operate their own U.S.-based aircraft within the region. Typically questions fall into one of three categories - administrative, operational or infrastructure.

Administrative issues generally include overcoming the difficulty of getting multiple-entry crew visas; excessive handling and permit coordination fees. Turnaround times for permits can be problematic as can obtaining solid, regional experts to help with trip planning.

Operational issues can include routing, or lack of direct routing; having less than optimal altitude assignments; converting back and forth from metric to standard altitude when flying in RVSM airspace; and altitude restrictions.

Infrastructure issues embrace the availability of long-range, affordable, reliable charter service and equipment, the closure to General Aviation of Beijing from 11:00am to 5:00pm daily, as well as WGS mapping deficiencies (missing areas) and lack of FBOs.

It may become apparent for some multi-national corporations that the best course of action is to set up a China-based aviation operation. With these concerns and questions in mind, Jeff and I set about the task of finding the best global resources to help address some of these major issues.

The best panel would consist of a group of multi-national flight department heads who currently fly their aircraft to this region. The format would be a discussion program rather than a mere presentation on individual companies and their ability to provide services. We felt this group of panelists as well as an audience filled with a desire to learn about a topic as hot as China was a no-lose program.

The multi-national companies selected to participate in the panel were those currently delivering their corporate brands into the Asian markets - PepsiCo; JP Morgan Chase; GE Corporate Air Transport; United Technologies Flight Operations; and Hewlett-Packard.

We then looked at the provider-side of the equation and we were just as fortunate on that side of the panel with participants. They included representatives from the international desk of the FAA; Jeppesen; NetJets, Inc.; The Helicopter Association International; Universal Weather; Hong Kong Jet; and Argus.

We also had representatives from Hawker Pacific Shanghai and the Chairman of AsBAA (Asian Business Aviation Association). Like last year's forum, audience members had the opportunity to share their comments and questions, as well as their individual challenges and successes in the region.

Our main challenge was how to provide participants with solid answers to their questions and concerns in a two-hour time period. We realized we would only be able to

scratch the surface of this broad and complex topic, but we knew we were not alone in helping to educate others in utilizing Business Aviation in these emerging markets.

Shanghai 2012 and ABACE (Asian Business Aviation Conference and Exhibition) will be taking place March 27-29, and will provide yet another venue for learning and obtaining resources in the Asian region. Jeff and I are already preparing for this major event and are hopeful to have many companies from the U.S. and other parts of the world travel there to see first-hand the region and its challenges.

In between the NBAA and ABACE shows, Jeff and I will coordinate with NBAA to find other methods of aggregating the panelist as well as the audience to continue this important dialog. Please feel free to communicate other questions or issues you may have about branching out into the China market by contacting me at jay@jetsales.com.

We want to keep a strong relevance in these programs. Our goal is to help Business Aviation in the China/Asian region move at the speed of business!

› Jay Mesinger is the CEO and Founder of J. Mesinger Corporate Jet Sales, Inc. Jay is on the NBAA Board of Directors and is Chairman of AMAC. He served on the Duncan Aviation Customer Advisory Board for two terms and now joins the Jet Aviation Customer Advisory Board. Jay is also a member of EBAA and the Colorado Airport Business Association (CABA). If you would like to join in on conversations relating to trends in Business Aviation, share your comments on - Jay's blog www.jetsales.com/blog, Twitter and LinkedIn. For more information visit www.jetsales.com

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