

Muted NBAA 2009 survives another year



By Liz Moscrop

This year's 62nd annual shindig for the great and the good of the business aviation sector kicked off in Orlando overshadowed by doom and gloom. Although various market forecasts indicate that the business jet market is making steady albeit slow improvements, attendance was down by at least 25% on 2008.

Brazil's Embraer livened a sombre show by announcing its new large-cabin Legacy 650 on the eve of the convention, bringing its executive jet product range to seven. The latest \$29.5 million addition to the Embraer Executive Jets family shares the same EMB-135 platform as the Legacy 600 and certification will be based on the 600's type certificate. The Legacy 650 first flew in

of its workforce this year from 16,000 to 8,000 and will deliver 275 jets this year, with even fewer predicted in 2010. Cessna has also made significant improvements to the Encore + replacement the Citation CJ4, which is in currently in certification and was on display at the static for the first time.

Meanwhile Bombardier was heavily promoting two revamped interiors for the Learjet 60XR after its main customer for the type European fractional start-up Jet Republic collapsed earlier this year.

Dornier resurfaces

Dornier Seaplane announced that it would restart production of the halted Seastar amphibian, having passed the ten orders it

said it required to revive the programme, and Garmin used the show as a platform to launch its a next generation integrated flightdeck, the

touchscreen G3000. Certification is due in the second half of 2011.

Both Honda Aircraft Company and Piper opted for the new G3000. The HondaJet will be outfitted with the new flightdeck when it enters service at the end of 2011. Honda, had a proof-of-concept aircraft on display at the show and aims for first flight early next year.

Stratos Aircraft said it may add a fifth seat to its 714 light jet and switch to a Pratt & Whitney Canada PW500 engine, rather than its current choice of the Williams International FJ44.

Other manufacturers also suggested new products are on the horizon. Piaggio Aero's chief Alberto Galassi said that the next member of the Avanti II family would be a jet. Meanwhile Hawker Beechcraft chairman Bill Boisture said that the company would introduce a new Hawker 450.

By any accounts NBAA was a quiet triumph for its organisers. "In short, it's clear that year's convention was the place to be for everyone whose passion and profession involves business aviation," Bolen said. ■



Top: Thin on the ground - attendance was well down
Left: Embraer's Shuttle
Below: Dornier plans to restart Seastar production

September, and certification flight-testing is already underway with two aircraft flying. Luis Carlos Affonso Embraer's executive vice president of executive jets said: "We announced that we would not be introducing any new platforms last year," he said. "We said nothing about no new aircraft."

Cessna's chairman Jack Pelton said that the company's recently cancelled large cabin Columbus programme was not necessarily dead in the water. He said: "I like to say the Columbus is suspended - although it is officially cancelled. It is on the planning horizon for market entry at some time." The Wichita Kansas based airframer has shed 50%