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GENERAL AVIATION SERVICE BUSINESS SURVEY RESULTS RELEASED

Alexandria, VA, August 20, 2008 — A survey conducted by the National Air Transportation Association (NATA) has begun to quantify the high costs of inconsistent FAA regulatory interpretations.

“This survey clearly demonstrates the high, unnecessary costs aviation businesses suffer due to the FAA’s inconsistent interpretation of the federal aviation regulations,” said NATA President James K. Coyne. “The FAA absolutely must find a way to regulate the private sector consistently – or Congress must mandate that they do so.”

NATA conducted the survey – *How Does Lack of FAA Standardization Affect General Aviation Operators?* – in response to numerous NATA members’ reports of having experienced varying interpretations of federal aviation regulations (FARs) by the agency’s Regional, Aircraft Certification (ACOs) and Flight Standards District Offices (FSDOs).

According to survey respondents, many affected companies continue to be challenged by regulatory interpretations that vary from one inspector within one FSDO or ACO, to another. These varying interpretations of how to achieve or demonstrate compliance with the FARs are estimated by the respondents to cost general aviation businesses hundreds of millions of dollars annually when previously approved actions are subjected to “re-interpretation.” The results of the survey showed:

- 89% of NATA members responded that their businesses have suffered due to inconsistent regulations.
- Affected aspects of aviation businesses included aircraft (30%), operations (35%) and approval of manuals (35%).
- 81% stated that lack of standardization is the result of the FAA’s reluctance to accept prior approval.
- 7% of NATA members reported waiting at least 30 days to resolve a discrepancy with an FAA regional office; 20% waited 30-60 days; 19% waited 61-120 days and 51% waited 121 days or longer.

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- Most importantly, the report highlighted that significant financial loss resulted, \$10,000 to over \$2,000,000 in costs, not including legal fees, due to instances such as delayed Minimum Equipment Lists approvals.

There are 9 FAA regions, 10 ACOs and more than 80 FSDOs that each issue approvals on a wide range of maintenance and operational requests made by regulated entities. These regulated entities include Part 135 on-demand charter operators, Part 145 repair stations, and Part 141 and 61 flight training facilities.

“Inconsistent compliance interpretations of the FARs are not only costly for the industry, they also demonstrate a shortcoming in the FAA’s ability to coordinate its workforce and ensure that the decision-making abilities vested in inspectors are respected across all divisions of the agency,” said Coyne.

NATA has asked Congress to request a GAO report to review fully how inconsistent regulatory interpretations are costing the FAA and the aviation industry millions of dollars in resources and raising serious concerns about unified safety standards.

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NATA, the voice of aviation business, is the public policy group representing the interests of aviation businesses before the Congress and federal agencies.