

FAA News



Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: September 27, 2012

Contact: Holly Baker

Phone: 609-485-6253

Email: holly.baker@faa.gov

FAA Establishes New Center of Excellence for General Aviation

WASHINGTON – U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood today announced that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has selected a team of universities to lead a new Air Transportation Center of Excellence (COE) for general aviation. The COE will focus research and testing efforts on safety, accessibility and sustainability to enhance the future of general aviation.

“The United States has the largest and most diverse general aviation community in the world, with more than 300,000 aircraft registered to fly through American skies,” said Secretary LaHood. “This innovative partnership with academia and industry will help us take general aviation safety to the next level.”

The selected group is called the FAA Center of Excellence Partnership to Enhance General Aviation Safety, Accessibility and Sustainability (PEGASAS), and will be led by Purdue University, The Ohio State University and the Georgia Institute of Technology. The core team also will include the Florida Institute of Technology, Iowa State University and Texas A&M University. Affiliate members include: Arizona State University, Florida A&M, Hampton University, Kent State University, North Carolina A&T State University, Oklahoma State University, Southern Illinois University (Carbondale), Tufts University, Western Michigan University and University of Minnesota, Duluth.

The FAA’s COE program is a cost-sharing research partnership between academia, industry and the federal government. Research and development efforts by PEGASAS will cover a broad spectrum of general aviation safety issues, including airport technology, propulsion and structures, airworthiness, flight safety, fire safety, human factors, system safety management and weather.

The PEGASAS university members all have nationally recognized collegiate flight education programs, and three of the core members (Purdue, Ohio State and Texas A&M) also own and operate their own airports. Research projects will be performed through a partnership of principal investigators from the different universities. PEGASAS will engage both graduate-level and undergraduate students in its research activities.

“The FAA continues its goal of working to reduce general aviation fatalities by 10 percent over a 10-year period, from 2009 to 2018,” said Acting FAA Administrator Michael Huerta. “The Center of Excellence program is a valuable tool in providing the critical data we need to reduce those accidents.”

PEGASAS industry and organizational partners are GE Aviation; Battelle Memorial Institute; NetJets Inc.; Cessna; Gulfstream; Piper; Raytheon; Rockwell Collins; Cirrus; Flight Safety Foundation; Guardian Mobility; Harris Corporation; Jet Aviva; NextGen AeroSciences; Nelson Consulting; Rolls-Royce; The Spectrum Group; Take Flight Solutions; Woolpert; the Flight Deck Display Research Laboratory at NASA Ames; Columbus Regional, South Bend and Fort Wayne Airports; Florida, Georgia, Iowa and Indiana Departments of Transportation; the National Business Aviation Association; the National Intercollegiate Flying Association; and Ohio Aerospace Institute. These non-federal affiliates will provide matching contributions to help offset the FAA’s investment in the COE’s general aviation research initiatives.

The FAA established the first Center of Excellence for General Aviation in 2001 through a 10-year agreement to conduct general aviation research in airport and aircraft safety areas. The research topics included pilot training, human factors, weather, Automatic Dependent Surveillance/Broadcast (ADS-B), remote airport lighting systems and other matters.

As the first Center of Excellence for General Aviation research concludes, the new team will continue critical research, testing and education efforts. The FAA intends to invest a minimum of \$500,000 per year during the first five years of the new, 10-year agreement with PEGASAS.

Congress authorized Air Transportation Centers of Excellence under the Federal Aviation Administration Research, Engineering and Development Authorization Act of 1990. This legislation enables the FAA to work with university partners and industry affiliates to conduct research in airspace and airport planning and design, environment and aviation safety, as well as to engage in other activities to assure a safe and efficient air transportation system.

The FAA has established Centers of Excellence in eight other topic areas, focusing on commercial space transportation, airliner cabin environment and intermodal research, aircraft noise and aviation emissions mitigation, computational modeling of aircraft structures, advanced materials, airport pavement and airport technology, operations research and airworthiness

assurance. For more information about the FAA Centers of Excellence program, visit the COE web page at <http://www.faa.gov/go/coe>.

###