



FAA
Office of Commercial Space Transportation

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I wanted to update you on the important changes happening in the Office of Commercial Space Transportation (AST), and what it means for you and your members.

Since 2012, licensed activities increased 1,000% and AST's budget and staffing increased roughly 40 percent. Moreover, we are now looking at another potential increase of 100-500% in commercial launch activity by 2021 while our staff may only increase about 20 percent. Making this period even more interesting is the significant uptick in the complexity and variability of proposed launch and reentry vehicles. We also expect a commercially viable human spaceflight participant landscape involving space tourism that could lead to 100+ flights per year. To meet this growing demand, AST is taking a multi-pronged approach to meet the growing needs of the commercial space industry:

- A new streamlined regulation for launch/reentry activities;
- Reorganizing along functional lines to increase accountability;
- Retooling almost all internal processes for effectiveness and efficiency; and
- Hiring the right additional staff with the right skills to meet tomorrow's demands.

Streamlined Regulation

As you know, under the President's Space Policy Directive-2 (SPD-2), we were directed to develop a new performance based regulation for launch and reentry operations. We plan to publish this new regulation by Fall 2020. The primary cornerstones of this rule are: streamlining four current rules into one; the ability to issue a single license for multiple launches from more than one launch site; and moving from a prescriptive approach to a performance-based approach to foster innovation. All while maintaining our laser focus on public safety. This extraordinary effort alone consumes, at any given time, about 20-40 percent of our workload capacity. When we complete this effort, we will also need to rewrite four more rules over the coming years

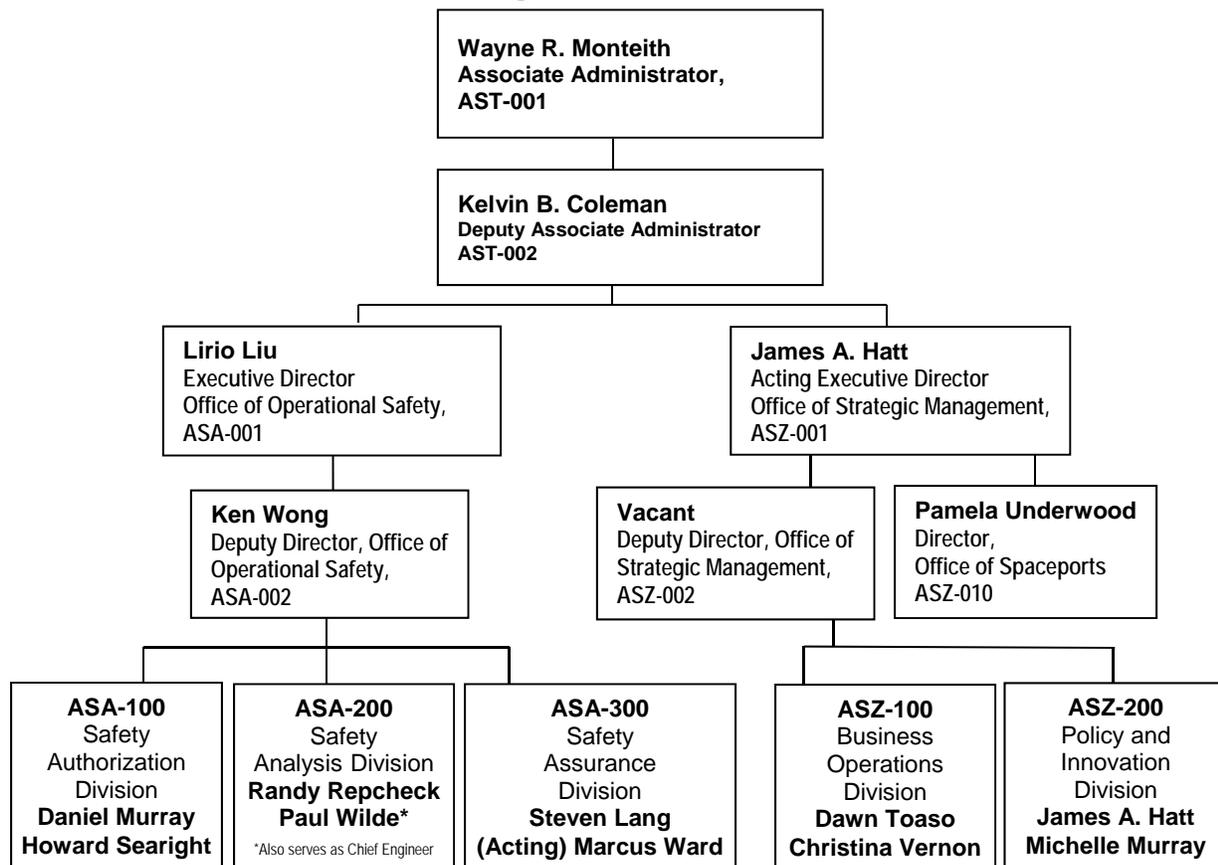


Reorganization

AST just completed the Secretary’s directive from April 2019 to reorganize in preparation for the Streamlined Final Rule. Our reorganization objectives are to increase efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability. Most importantly, it will allow us to scale our processes to meet the increased licensing demand over the next several years.

This reorganization established two new offices – an Office of Operational Safety, and an Office of Strategic Management. An FAA Executive will lead each of the offices, and have direct report divisions. The Operational Safety office includes an Authorization Division that acts as a one-stop shop for all pre-application consultations, licenses, permits, and waivers; a Safety Analysis Division responsible for analyzing flight safety and system safety issues; and a Safety Assurance Division for compliance oversight and inspections. The Strategic Management office will be responsible for developing regulations and guidance, conducting and managing research activities, managing stakeholder outreach, operating the Office of Spaceports, and conducting management services, which includes human and financial resources management, and training. The now codified Office of Spaceports will have a dedicated Director focused exclusively on spaceport issues. I have included our organizational chart to show the new structure below.

AST Organizational Chart





Retooling Processes

A third major effort to meet the challenges of the future include reengineering all of our internal processes. We do not have the luxury of doing business the same way we did when we had only three launches per year. So we have already begun to revamp our pre-application and licensing processes, and we continue to explore the potential to move to an automated licensing process. We are also reevaluating how we conduct oversight and inspections by looking for creative ways to reduce our on-site footprint. For example, we have shown we can be on console at facilities at Cape Canaveral AFS or elsewhere without traveling to the actual launch site and still accomplish our safety oversight role. This effort, combined with our reorganization, will allow us to scale our operations to meet future demands.

Hiring

We cannot accomplish any of the above without continuing to on-board the right people, with the right skills, in the right positions. So, we have accelerated hiring of both new college graduates as well as experienced engineers to augment our incredible team. We have also begun to create an organic training development capability, and are reducing the time it takes to certify qualified safety inspectors. We will continue to refine our approaches over time.

I hope this helps you understand the tremendous amount of work our staff has gone through in the past year and a half to continue protecting the public while also preparing our organization to facilitate the industry, including the members of the Commercial Spaceflight Federation.

I look forward to continuing working closely with all our stakeholders as we enter a future of unlimited potential!

Sincerely,

Wayne R. Monteith

Wayne R. Monteith
Associate Administrator for Commercial
Space Transportation