New FAA Oceanic Air Traffic System Designed By Lockheed Martin Fully Operational

Anchorage Control Center Completes Transition

The Federal Aviation Administration's Advanced Technologies and Oceanic Procedures (ATOP) system, developed by Lockheed Martin , is now fully operational. The Anchorage Air Route Traffic Control Center in Alaska, the last of three FAA sites transitioning to ATOP, successfully completed its transition in March.

"With the center at Anchorage becoming fully operational, the ATOP system promises major benefits for air traffic controllers and ultimately for airlines," said Sue Corcoran, vice president of Aviation Solutions for Lockheed Martin. "We are proud to have helped the FAA meet its challenge to create a system that increases efficiency and oceanic airspace capacity to meet growing international air traffic demands."

The Anchorage center, which successfully transitioned its sectors on March 1, is the first ATOP site to use the radar functionality of the system. As a result, the ATOP system is capable of operating both non-radar and radar separation. Air Route Traffic Control Centers in Ronkonkoma, N.Y., and Oakland, Calif., deployed ATOP technology in 2005 for the Atlantic and Pacific regions.

The system provides safe separation of aircraft in areas outside radar coverage or direct radio communication, such as over the ocean. It detects conflicts between aircraft, provides satellite data link communication and position information to air traffic controllers, and significantly reduces the intensive manual process that limited the flexibility of controllers to safely handle airline requests for more efficient tracks over long oceanic routes.

By allowing controllers to proactively manage airspace, the ATOP system is enabling them to be more responsive to airspace user requests. For example, during one 12-month period since the system went operational at the New York center, ATOP allowed controllers to grant 90 percent more altitude change requests. Aviation industry experts analyzing oceanic flights linking the United States to the Caribbean Islands and South America have estimated that ATOP will save airlines nearly $8 million per year, while annually conserving slightly less than 6.5 million pounds of fuel.

Before ATOP, oceanic flights were manually guided with the help of paper flight strips, and controllers were required to separate flights by up to 100 nautical miles. With ATOP, controllers have the ability to reduce separations to 30 nautical miles for properly equipped aircraft, allowing the FAA to reduce delays, support fuel-efficient routes, and accommodate increased international air traffic.

Supporting Lockheed Martin on the ATOP program are Adacel, a supplier of oceanic automation software; Airways Corporation of New Zealand, the first air navigation service provider to apply communications, navigation, surveillance and air traffic management (CNS/ATM) technology developed specifically for the oceanic environment; and Sunhillo Corporation, provider of the external communications server, which provides access to external data interfaces. Lockheed Martin was awarded the ATOP contract in June 2001.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin employs about 140,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services. The corporation reported 2006 sales of $39.6 billion.

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