

■ THE AVIATION LEADERSHIP ROUNDTABLE

EVERYONE IS PULLING TOGETHER

The Spirit of Our Industry



2003 is a big year for the aviation industry. Many celebrations are occurring and opportunities for reflection with 100 years of flight! Seldom have there been events that have changed mankind as has powered

flight. As a reminder of these accomplishments, our industry has just wrapped up its most prestigious trade show, the National Business Aviation Association's 56th annual convention. This year the event was held in Orlando, Florida.

The show brings together those people who are responsible for designing, manufacturing, selling and reporting on our modern day aviation industry. New products are discussed, future aircraft are displayed and the tone and mood for the next year in aviation is set. This article is dedicated to that tone and mood.

Now let's discuss the spirit of our aviation business, the very essence of our industry's future.

Have you ever heard the term, "Truth in Advance?" You know, sometimes if you say and hear something enough a ground swell occurs, and then all of a sudden with enough focus and belief it becomes reality. This past week, I witnessed an entire aviation enterprise getting behind a common theme. Our industry is getting better. I am so proud of all of the participants who attended this last week's convention. Without exception, I heard everyone declare a health and vitality in our industry that has not been collectively articulated in several years.

No one believed that a magic wand would be waved, but everyone felt a real sense of good health and prosperity that, even though it is just in its beginning stages, was growing and building upon itself. A real revitalization was felt by all those involved to believe the industry's weak period was coming to an end. Do not be mistaken, prices of new and used aircraft will not be zooming up tomorrow, inventories will not be evapo-

So what does this really mean to us today, right now? It means that we can begin to worry less about when we are going to recover and instead focus our collective industry vision on collaborating with each other to plot our path for success. As I mentioned earlier in this article, prices have not yet totally firmed up. In fact many surveys that I read this last week still point to a slight increase in inventories of pre-owned fleets and a slight decline in prices. The operative word in both observations is slight.

This is a new word for us when defining both increased inventory and reduced pricing. In almost all categories this trend held true. We as an industry will still have to deal with the challenges of an aging fleet and the regulatory issues still ahead of us. These hurdles will face us in the next couple of years. Yet we are a bound and determined industry. We are the ones that have had the ability to put man in flight and into an aircraft.

We are all pulling for this recovery as I have never seen us as an industry do before. We are a proud group and we are

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I have been a part of this industry for 29 years. Of course during that time many changes have taken place and different moods have existed. The industry, just like the economy, has had its ups and downs. The challenges have been monumental over the years. The industry has had to deal with noise, crowded skies, security and mounting regulatory issues.

Nothing that has faced us can overcome the sheer magic of flight and the ability to move people and cargo great distances safely and efficiently. Companies use these powerful & innovative tools to get out in front of their competition, get out ahead of the pack and bring new ideas and complex answers to their customers and clients.

rating overnight, but activity - real activity is at hand.

I had many opportunities to speak first hand with the leading players in our industry this past week. My relationships with all of the manufacturers is such that the opportunity for one on one face time brought me insights into their worlds and their individual beliefs. Bombardier, Gulfstream, Dassault, Raytheon and Cessna all spoke of renewed activity, reduced inventories of their pre-owned fleets and whitetails all but gone! They all felt an optimism that had not existed since before 9/11.

Each person that I spoke to believed the worst was over. All segments of the industry felt the same. Business was coming back.

putting that pride and vision into a collective mantra. Our industry is better, it is stronger and it will survive and flourish.

To all those who I had the chance to visit this past week, thank you for your encouragement and outright pride in this healing process. The last 100 years of flight will be followed by 100 more. The accomplishments of each of us will be celebrated for years to come. We are truly pulling together as one. It is this phenomenon and spirit that causes great things to happen!

■ Jay Mesinger is the CEO of J. Mesinger Corporate Jet Sales, Inc. He hosts the Aviation Leadership Roundtable found at www.jetsales.com and is also the Vice Chairman of NARA (National Aircraft Resale Association).