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## Flyht keeps tabs on aircraft

October 20, 2009  
 Business Aviation

Air France Flight 447, the Airbus A330-200 that was lost over the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Brazil in June, was the elephant in the room when AeroMechanical Services (AMS) briefed the press on its Flyht Automated Flight Information Reporting System (Afirs) at NBAA yesterday. Flyht, which is currently installed aboard aircraft operated by more than 30 airlines, monitors, records and reports in real time enough aircraft operational data to fill an Excel spreadsheet. Any anomalies are sent to operational, dispatch and maintenance centers and even to the BlackBerry and iPhones of CEOs. Calgary-based AMS (Booth No. 1493) is now aiming the product at the business aviation community.

Richard Hayden, AMS president, said that Afirs is intended as a tool to enhance operational efficiency and spot anomalies before they create problems, but he declined to speculate whether the system would have allowed a different outcome to whatever befell Flight 447. However, he said the Flyht system would have tracked the location of the Airbus to its very last moment until it went down in the Atlantic and delivered much more data than the alerts sent by the stricken airliner.

Flyht uses the Iridium satcom system, providing coverage everywhere in the world. The onboard unit, which weighs about eight pounds, continuously streams data downloaded to servers operated by IBM, a business partner, and, if an anomaly is detected or data requested, sends it on to customers within 15 to 20 seconds of transmission from the aircraft. The Flyht system has been certified for the Hawker Beechcraft Hawker 800 series, and the company expects to add to the list of business aircraft approved for installation.

Flyht's hardware costs about \$50,000, Hayden said. Services can be ordered on a menu basis. The company has not set the hourly costs for business aviation applications. Hayden said airline customers realized positive cash flow from the system within six to nine months, as a result of increased fuel efficiency, reduced maintenance costs and increased dispatch availability.

Jack Olcott, former president of NBAA and currently a member of the AMS board, noted the system "is a powerful tool for complying with government mandates, which are increasing in number and are costly for the operators, if not followed."

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