



ECLIPSE FLIES INTO THE SUNSHINE

News / Business aviation



You wouldn't know to look at it from the outside, but there's a lot going on in Hangar 4 at Chicago Executive Airport (KPWK). This is one of two factory-owned service centers for One Aviation's **Eclipse** very light twinjets. In any given 12-month period, nearly 150 of the 282 strong Eclipse fleet will pass through these unmarked doors or those at Eclipse's Albuquerque, N.M. headquarters for service, inspections and installation of a plethora of available upgrades.

Since 2009, when the remains of the original company were bought out of bankruptcy, the Eclipse team has been working diligently and quietly to finish adding promised equipment and upgrades to the aircraft and providing quality service to its far-flung fleet.

"We've been busy for six years," said One Aviation president Ken Ross. "We've got fifty thousand hours on the fleet. It is a sophisticated little airplane. There's never been a Part 23 airplane with autothrottles, and we've added anti-skid brakes [as part of an upgrade package]. At both locations we'll have 20 airplanes at any given time, doing service and performing remedial upgrades, converting some aircraft to [special editions](#) (SEs). We'll run through a third of the fleet at this location annually and probably the same in New Mexico."

In addition to the factory-owned centers, Eclipse has two factory-authorized centers in the U.S.: Boca Aviation in Boca Raton, Fla., and Crown Air in San Diego, Calif. There are a half dozen others in Johannesburg, Dubai, Istanbul, Germany, the UK and Holland. The Eclipse is certified in 46 countries; 92 airplanes are flying internationally from Singapore to South Africa.

“We’re pretty well dispersed,” Ross said.

Many of the original factory aircraft were either delivered with systems short of what was promised or with systems that needed upgrading. So before restarting the production line, Eclipse’s new ownership focused on filling those needs and providing existing customers with the service they required, Ross explained. “We’ve been doing service and performing remedial upgrades, while converting [and remanufacturing] some aircraft to SEs.”

“Today two-thirds of the fleet is upgraded to IFMS [integrated flight management system avionics] or greater. There are still about 40 airplanes total that have the [old] Avidyne [avionics]. Some have the Garmin 400, which acts as the navigation system for ILS and GPS approaches. Upgrading those airplanes will run \$700,000 and up [the Eclipse 500 Plus Package]. A lot of those airplanes are on the secondary market and the new buyers come in and do the upgrades. When they are done they have an all-in cost that is extremely competitive with a [remanufactured] SE or new 550 [\$2.995 million]. The SE airplanes come with three-year warranties and three-year maintenance plans. That’s the highest in our industry and in our class; no one else offers that. Our new airplanes come with a five-year warranty and a five-year maintenance plan. All scheduled maintenance and inspections are covered by the factory. We think that is the most attractive maintenance program and warranty in the industry,” Ross said.

A Plus package includes new cockpit displays, hardware and expandable architecture; anti-skid brakes; in-seat power supply; new glass faced PPG windshields; new software, including dual FMS, EFIS based autothrottle, fuel timing and tall terminal charts; and enabled keyboard cursor device.

With any upgrade, remanufacturing or new manufacturing pricing, Ross said the company tries to look out for the legacy Eclipse owner. “Those who have significantly invested in the airplane and still own them get preferred pricing. Our intent is always to recognize our existing customers first and treat them with respect for sticking with the company through its turbulent years, before we acquired it. Since that time 30 to 35 percent of the fleet has changed hands and has new owners.”

Ross said One Aviation continues to improve Eclipse customer support. “Ninety-eight percent of our AOG events are solved within 24 hours domestically; 48 hours worldwide. We are continually trying to lower prices on items such as batteries and other high-utilization items,” Ross said.

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