FAA VALIDATES CLAY LACY AVIATION’ SMS PROGRAM IN TOP 2% NATIONALLY

News / Business aviation

FAA validated and recognized Clay Lacy Aviation' organization-wide approach as a leader within private aviation for its Safety Management System meeting new standards of the FAA SMS Voluntary Program. The validation places Clay Lacy in the top 2% of Part 135 operators in the United States that have completed this process and developed a culture of safety promotion. The FAA SMS Voluntary Program attests that the company’s SMS also meets ICAO requirements.

David Lamb, Chief Operating Officer, commented: “Clay Lacy has a commitment and priority to safety, continuous improvement and enhancing our safety culture to be proactive and predictive to address problems before they occur. We are going above and beyond what the FAA is requiring because we recognize the importance and benefits of having a holistic, organizational approach to safety operations. We know that this is something that’s more important than checking a box. Our culture is one of leadership and doing the right thing on a daily basis. While this is an important milestone, we know that our work to improve is never completed.”

Clay Lacy’s SMS touches all components of operations, including aircraft management and maintenance, charter operations and its fixed-based operator (FBO) services. Its team began work to expand existing SMS to the FAA SMSVP standards about two years ago, engaging with the

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FAA throughout to share knowledge and implement better systems. The SMS implementation is part of Clay Lacy's Continuous Improvement Program (CIP) where the company fosters company-wide contribution and a systematic review and implementation process to benefit both external and internal stakeholders.

The FAA SMSVP consists of four safety components: policy, risk management, assurance and promotion. The company has aligned its processes, communications and risk assessments to meet and exceed all components. The SMS implementation mandate gives operators 24 months to meet the requirements Clay Lacy has already exceeded.

SMSVP in Action

One practical example of the new SMS was in identifying and assessing a potential hazard on thermal runaway events for batteries during flight. Clay Lacy airplanes are now equipped with thermal runaway bags and flight crews have been trained in case of this rare incident. Outside of equipment and materials, Clay Lacy has instituted a risk assessment and management process throughout its operations, including within accounting and computer systems. It has developed a standard operating procedure at every level.

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