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King Air 360ER

Courtesy Textron Aviation

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The Broker Behind the Policy

Why your King Air deserves more than a quote

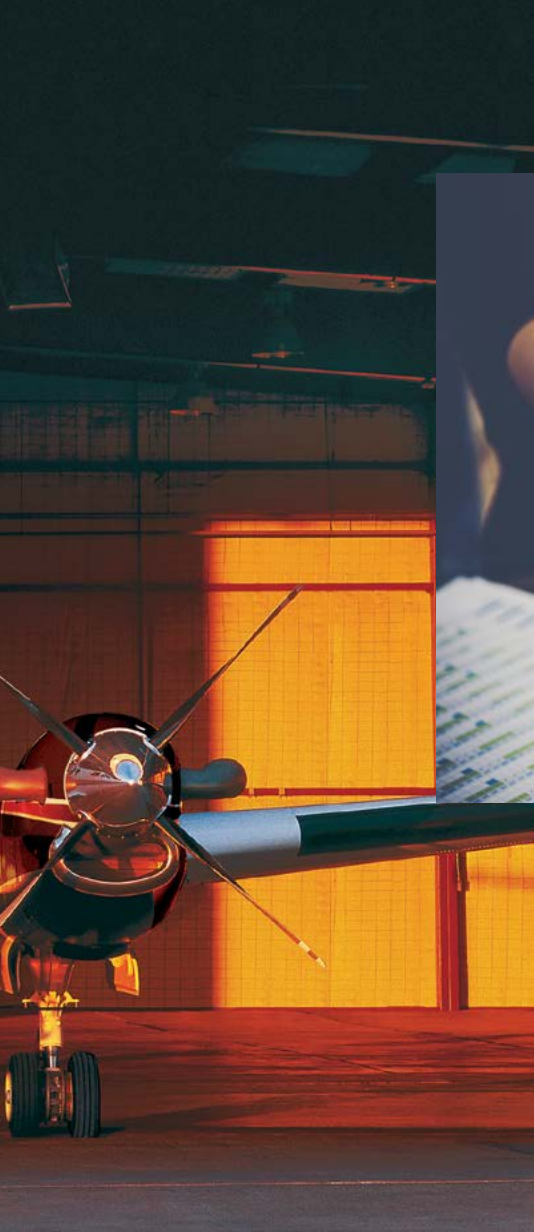
by Kyle P. White

When I started flying King Airs professionally, I quickly learned that the aircraft demands respect – not just from the pilot behind the yoke but from everyone involved in keeping it in the air. The same principle applies to insuring one. A Beechcraft King Air is not a Cessna 172. It is a pressurized, turbine-powered machine that carries real liability exposure and represents a significant financial asset. Yet in the current market environment, I am watching more aircraft owners treat

their insurance placement like a commodity purchase – and that concerns me.

The short game: Lower premiums are real (for now)

If you have been through a renewal recently, you have likely noticed something welcome: relief. After a hard market cycle that began around 2017 and stretched nearly seven years, the tide has genuinely



turned. Capacity is returning to the aviation insurance space. New market entrants are actively writing business and, in some cases, they are bypassing the traditional broker distribution channel entirely and going direct to the consumer. Experienced underwriters are migrating to new platforms, creating the textbook conditions for a soft market – more competition, more capacity and lower premiums.

Some of these new entrants are genuinely innovative. One uses flight

data analytics to underwrite risk more granularly than any paper application ever could. Another is backed by Allianz with decades of aviation underwriting experience behind it. The short-term result is real: Pricing is moving in the buyer's direction and options that were unavailable a few years ago are back on the table.

So yes, if all you are looking at is this year's premium, the market looks friendly. But if you have been in aviation long enough, you know that friendly markets have a way of changing without much warning.

The long game: What goes down eventually comes back up

Here is what I want King Air owners to understand about insurance market cycles:

Soft markets attract capital. New entrants price aggressively to gain market share. This strategy works for a while, with manageable loss ratios

and declining premiums. Then reality intervenes.

Aviation is a low-frequency, high-severity line of business. A hull total loss on a well-equipped King Air 350 can easily reach \$5 million. A liability claim involving a fatality can run well beyond that. When a newer carrier – one that entered the market during a period of low loss activity and priced accordingly – suddenly faces a cluster of large claims, the math breaks down fast.

We have seen this before. The hard market that began in 2017 was the direct consequence of years of underpricing. When losses came due, carriers faced a choice: significantly tighten underwriting criteria or exit the market entirely. We watched both happen. Single-pilot King Air operations became difficult to insure above \$5 million hull. Pilots over age 75 faced premium surcharges and restricted liability limits. Some carriers stopped writing aviation altogether.

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The new soft market will not necessarily follow the same script – but if pricing drops below what is actuarially sound and losses trend upward, correction becomes a matter of when, not if. When that correction arrives, the owners who built broker relationships in the soft market will be in a very different position than those who shopped solely on price.

When the market turns, who does the work?

Let's say the correction comes. A carrier you placed with three years ago – one that offered a competitive rate directly to you without a broker – decides to non-renew your policy. Or they change their underwriting requirements in ways that affect your specific operation. Or, during renewal, they add exclusions that were not present before.

Where do you go?

This is not a hypothetical. I have seen it happen. Owners who went direct to a carrier or used a generalist agent who wrote aviation as a side product found themselves scrambling when their incumbent exited the market. They had no established relationships with alternative carriers. They had no one who understood the nuances of their operation well enough to present it favorably. They were starting from scratch at the worst possible time – often with a coverage lapse or a binder from a market they did not fully evaluate.

A dedicated aviation insurance broker does not just place coverage. They maintain active

relationships across the carrier landscape – including with markets that are not advertising on the internet. When one door closes, they know which others are open, and more importantly, they know how to get you through them.

The coverage question nobody asks until it is too late

Here is something I hear regularly, and it always gives me pause: "I compared the quotes side by side and the coverage looked the same."

Did it, though?

Aviation insurance policies are not standardized documents. Two policies that both say "\$2 million hull, \$10 million liability" can be dramatically different in the details that matter. Does your policy include broad form named insured language to cover an aircraft held in a shell LLC? Does it address W-2 employees versus 1099 contract pilots differently? What does the policy say about your dry lease arrangement? Is there a Mexico endorsement and does it override the worldwide coverage declaration? What about your FBO's waiver of subrogation requirement – does your policy accommodate that or does complying with your hangar lease agreement inadvertently void a portion of your coverage?

These are not obscure cases. These are questions that come up on real claims. Without a broker who specializes in aviation and knows your operation, comparing policies is like comparing aircraft performance charts without understanding density altitude – the ➤



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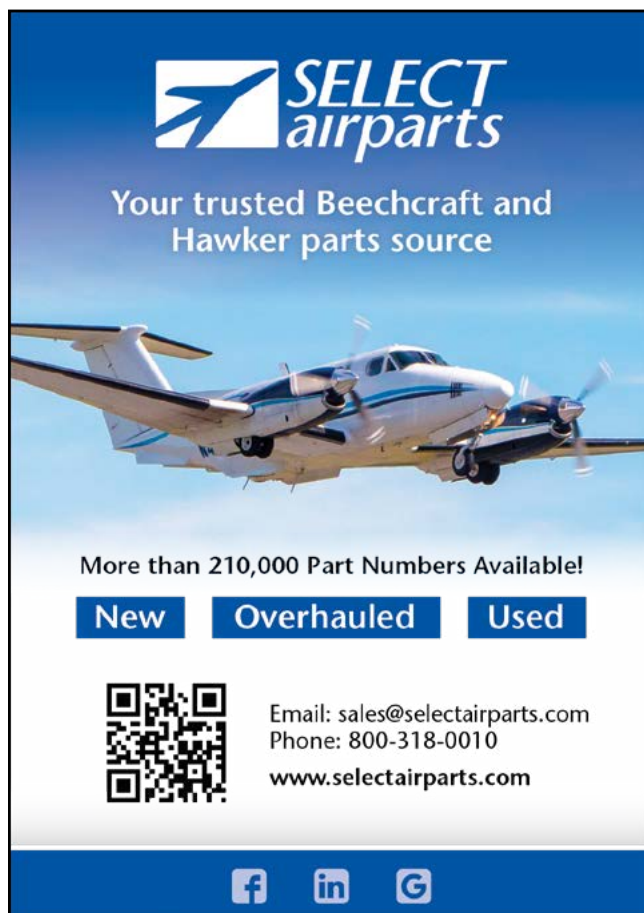
You'll learn where to invest for the biggest visual impact, common upgrade mistakes that waste budget, and how to coordinate cabin improvements with scheduled maintenance. Plus, see real-world before-and-after King Air transformations that prove how a few strategic upgrades can completely change the passenger experience.



"Without a broker who specializes in aviation and knows your operation, comparing policies is like comparing aircraft performance charts without understanding density altitude – the numbers look meaningful until the conditions change, and then the gap between what you expected and what you have becomes very real."

numbers look meaningful until the conditions change, and then the gap between what you expected and what you have becomes very real.

Who ensures there are no gaps? Who cross-checks the new carrier's policy language against what your operations actually require? If the answer is "me," I would encourage you to think carefully about the time, expertise and stakes involved.



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When you have a claim and the answer is no

Let me tell you about a real situation from 2024 involving a King Air owner in Florida with FOD damage to an engine. The estimate was \$103,000 and the insurance company's initial offer was \$68,000 – a \$35,000 gap on a single claim.

With a broker actively managing that claim, the final settlement came in at \$85,000, a \$17,000 improvement over where the carrier started. That did not happen because someone filed a form correctly. It happened because a broker who understands aviation engine damage and knows how adjusters work was at the table representing the owner's interests.

Now ask yourself what happens when the answer is not "we are paying less than we should" but "we are not covering this at all."

Claim denials happen – for reasons that are sometimes legitimate and sometimes are not. Pilot warranty violations, questions about aircraft airworthiness at the time of loss, use exclusions the owner was unaware of – these are the battlegrounds where having an advocate matters enormously. Without a broker, you are negotiating with a trained claims professional whose job, in part, is to minimize what the carrier pays. You may have every right to the coverage, but rights without representation are not always enough.

A broker who specializes in aviation knows when to push back, when to escalate and when to involve coverage counsel. They bring context the carrier does not have – the history of your account, the spirit of how the policy was placed, the operational details that support your position.

What the broker should be doing

I want to be clear: None of this is an argument for using any broker. It is an argument for using the right broker.

A broker who places your King Air insurance should be doing more than emailing quotes at renewal. They should be reviewing your pilot roster and flagging age transition issues before they become underwriting problems. They should be reading your FBO contracts and hangar leases for language that creates liability exposure. They should be checking your dry lease agreements against your policy language. They should be asking whether your training intervals and



approved training providers still align with your policy requirements. They should be helping you think through whether your extra expense coverage limits make sense given current use of your King Air.

When the market softens and new options emerge, your broker should be helping you evaluate them – not just on price but on financial strength, claims handling reputation and policy language. The cheapest quote is not always the worst choice, but it is rarely the whole story.

Closing thoughts

Aviation insurance is a specialty because the aircraft are complex, the operations are varied, the policies are dense and the consequences of a mistake are measured in outcomes that no one wants to experience. The soft market we are in right now is genuine and the savings are real. New entrants are

bringing innovation and competition that the market needed after years of tightening.

However, markets are cyclical. Coverage gaps do not announce themselves until a claim is filed. When you are sitting across from a claims adjuster who denies a claim you expected to be covered, the focus shifts from how much you saved at renewal to who is in your corner. Your King Air deserves someone who knows the aircraft, knows the market and knows your operation. That is what a specialized aviation insurance broker is expected to be. **KA**

Kyle P. White, ATP & MEII, is an aviation insurance executive for a global insurance brokerage company. As a former professional King Air captain on BB-1118, he still enjoys flying his family's J-model Bonanza and Piper Cub. He can be reached at kpwhite816@gmail.com.

OPERATOR SPOTLIGHT



LIFEGUARD

Saskatchewan Air Ambulance marks 80 years of providing critical care air transport

by MeLinda Schnyder

Photos courtesy Saskatchewan Air Ambulance

Earlier this year, Saskatchewan Air Ambulance celebrated 80 years of delivering emergency medical air transport and care to people across the large, landlocked province in western and central Canada. It is the oldest formally organized, non-military air medical transport program in North America, and likely the second oldest continuously operating in the world behind only Australia's Royal Flying Doctor Service.

Through eight decades, SAA has transported nearly 78,500 patients from newborns to seniors. Beechcraft's King Air B200 joined the air ambulance service 25 years ago, and today four King Airs comprise the program's entire fleet – each with the fitting call sign Lifeguard.

"The King Air B200 is well-suited to Saskatchewan Air Ambulance operations because it can reliably operate in all weather conditions and access a wide range of communities across the province," said Dan Knisley, SAA's director of flight operations.

It started with a Norseman

Saskatchewan is situated north of the U.S. states of Montana and North Dakota, south of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut and between Alberta to the west and Manitoba to the east. It is Canada's fifth largest province in area and sixth in population, stretching about 760 miles from north to south and covering more than 251,000 square miles – roughly the size of Texas.

In 1944, Saskatchewan elected North America's first social government by voting in Tommy Douglas as its



premier, a role he would hold until 1961. As World War II ended in fall 1945, and with the country still recovering from the Great Depression, there were few roads and hospitals serving isolated farms and villages across the province. Travel, especially in emergency situations, was tough, with roads commonly blocked by huge snowdrifts, spring thaw or rain.

Keith Malcolm, an air force veteran, would serve as the first pilot for the air ambulance service idea he brought to the provincial government to overcome distance and the challenges of Saskatchewan's vast geography, connecting patients to specialized care when they needed it most.

The service started with one pilot, one flight nurse and an aircraft mechanic operating a war-surplus Noorduyn Norseman (CF-SAH) acquired by the Saskatchewan Department of Public Health. The first patient transport happened on Feb. 3, 1946, when the Norseman flew from its base in Regina to pick up a female patient in the town of Liberty and brought her back to Regina, where a ground transfer got her to the hospital.



Lifeguard 1, serial number BB-1748, is a 2001 King Air B200.



Lifeguard 2, serial number BB-1972, is a 2007 King Air B200.

By April 1, the service had completed 51 flights. In August, a second aircraft (CF-SAM) was added to the fleet, along with an additional pilot and flight nurse, and the SAA averaged 20 flights a month through the first year.

At first, few communities had airfields, so planes often landed on fields or on open water with pontoons attached. For winter landings, skis were attached. In addition to transporting patients, the airplanes also delivered medical supplies and brought physicians or nurses to isolated communities for public health services.

The air ambulance service continued to grow and adapt to community needs through the years. From 1946



Lifeguard 3, serial number BB-1974, is a 2007 King Air B200.

to 1976, SAA employed 25 pilots, 17 aircraft engineers and 25 flight nurses.

Today, SAA operates through a partnership between three organizations. The Ministry of SaskBuilds and Procurement provides the aircraft, pilots, maintenance engineers, hangar facilities and operational support. The Saskatchewan Health Authority is responsible for medical oversight, including clinical staff and equipment. This includes flight nurses employed by the Saskatchewan Health Authority and critical care paramedics contracted from Medavie Health Services West. The Ministry of Health administers and funds the program.

Day-to-day operations are coordinated across these partners, ensuring that both aviation and medical expertise are fully integrated into the service. The current team includes 51 employees from the Ministry of SaskBuilds and Procurement and 42 from the Saskatchewan Health Authority.

Since 1993, SAA has operated from its base at Saskatoon John G. Diefenbaker International Airport (CYXE)

to dispatch aircraft and crews province-wide as needed 24 hours a day, seven days a week often in challenging weather and geographic conditions.

Each year, they transport approximately 1,500 patients, regularly responding to urgent, life-threatening medical cases, transporting patients from remote communities to specialized care in the province and inter-facility patient transfers within Saskatchewan and outside the province on occasion.

"Working together as one team, SAA's pilots, aircraft maintenance engineers and medical professionals have demonstrated decades of collaboration and dedicated service to the people of Saskatchewan," Knisley said.

A quarter century of King Air operations

Since starting with the Noorduyn Norseman aircraft, Saskatchewan Air Ambulance has operated a variety of models through its long history, including the Fairchild Husky, Cessna Crane, Cessna 195, Beechcraft Model 18 and Piper Cheyenne.



"Since 1993, SAA has operated from its base at Saskatoon John G. Diefenbaker International Airport (CYXE) to dispatch aircraft and crews province-wide as needed 24 hours a day, seven days a week often in challenging weather and geographic conditions."

Lifeguard 4, serial number BB-1790, is a 2002 King Air B200.

In 2001, SAA began replacing its aging fleet of Pipers by acquiring its first two King Air B200 aircraft, citing in a news release that demand for air ambulance services had nearly doubled in the past five years. Increased capacity with the King Air platform was an important factor. The B200s allow for two stretcher-bound patients rather than just one in the Piper Cheyenne III-A and also give the space needed to transport critically ill infants and children when a nurse or parent must accompany the patient.

With the first two airplanes proving themselves reliable and capable of supporting safe and efficient patient transport, two additional King Air B200 aircraft were purchased in 2007. Moving to an all B200 fleet benefitted the in-house maintenance team and streamlined training for pilots and ground crew.

The current quartet has been in place since 2017: two 2007 units, one manufactured in 2001 and another in 2002. Through the years, numerous modifications have been made to these aircraft including Garmin G1000 NXi avionics and ADS-B capability; BLR winglets; Hartzell swept propellers; Raisbeck dual aft body strakes, Ram



Typical SAA flights have medical supplies, monitoring equipment and medications on board.



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Each King Air is outfitted with a LifePort medical interior that may allow for up to two non-ambulatory patients.



Saskatchewan Air Ambulance's King Air B200 aircraft have Garmin G1000 NXi flight decks installed.



Earlier this year, SAA celebrated 80 years by gathering those responsible for the 1,500 patient transports that will happen this year. Through eight decades, the air ambulance service has transported nearly 78,500 patients.

Air Recovery System and enhanced leading edge modifications; and the CenTex Halo gross weight increase conversions. Each King Air is outfitted with a LifePort medical interior that may allow for up to two non-ambulatory patients.

"A key advantage is the King Air's capability to operate from short grass and gravel runways, as short as 3,000 feet which is critical for serving rural and remote areas in Saskatchewan," Knisley explained. "This, combined with its cruising speed, allows patients to access specialized care more quickly. Our King Airs are also equipped for higher-weight operations, providing flexibility when additional fuel or heavier medical payloads are required."

Typical flights have medical supplies, monitoring equipment and medications on board, including a ventilator, defibrillator/pacemaker and type O blood. Equipment such as a transport incubator is added when neonatal patients are involved.

Proud employees making a difference

A typical crew for a Saskatchewan Air Ambulance mission includes a captain and first officer, a flight nurse and a critical care paramedic. Additional medical support may be added on a case-by-case basis.

SAA operates with an in-house, multidisciplinary team that includes pilots, aircraft maintenance engineers and operational support staff. All pilots are trained in accordance with Canadian Aviation Regulations and are approved by Transport Canada. An ideal SAA pilot candidate has strong instrument flying skills, multi-engine turboprop experience, satellite navigation

"Working together as one team, SAA's pilots, aircraft maintenance engineers and medical professionals have demonstrated decades of collaboration and dedicated service to the people of Saskatchewan."



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CF-SAM was the second Noorduyn Norseman put into service during Saskatchewan Air Ambulance's inaugural year in 1946.

skills and experience in high-density airspace as well as northern and remote areas.

Many employees have family ties to the organization, like John Wilson, the aircraft maintenance supervisor who started at SAA in 1998 and whose father worked as an aircraft maintenance engineer for 31 years after joining during SAA's inaugural year.

"Recognizing staff as our greatest asset, Saskatchewan Air Ambulance continues to lead in the field of aeromedical transportation," Knisley concluded. "Our employees are highly trained and use their skills to change patient outcomes every day." **KA**

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Buying a King Air? Avoid These Costly Tax Mistakes

by Noah Block, CPA

Purchasing a King Air can be an exciting step for a business owner. Flying an airplane for business purposes can save time and improve access to customers and projects while creating significant tax planning opportunities. However, the tax benefits of aircraft ownership are not automatic.

Many King Air buyers have their eyes set on bonus depreciation but overlook the details that determine if they qualify. Before closing on the aircraft, buyers should

understand the most common tax mistakes that can create issues later.

1. Buying the aircraft in the wrong entity

One of the first decisions in an aircraft acquisition is determining who or what entity should own the aircraft. Many buyers assume that forming a new LLC to own the aircraft is the right answer. While this is usually true, the member of that LLC is often overlooked.

The structure should consider who will use the aircraft and how the tax deductions will flow through to the taxpayer.

Buying in the wrong entity can create problems with increased IRS audit risk, passive activity rules, related-party leasing or the ability to use the depreciation deduction.

2. Assuming the aircraft is fully deductible because it is used for business

A King Air may be used frequently for business, but that does not mean every dollar of aircraft expense is automatically deductible. The aircraft's use must be analyzed based on every flight and every passenger.

Business flights may include travel to customer meetings, project sites, conferences, board meetings, facility visits or other ordinary and necessary business activities. However, personal travel, entertainment-related flights, commuting, spouse or family travel and mixed-purpose trips may need to be treated differently.

For bonus depreciation purposes, buyers generally need to pay close attention to whether the aircraft is used more than 50% for qualified business use. Falling below that threshold can significantly change the depreciation result.

3. Waiting until after closing to discuss state tax

State sales and use tax planning should happen before closing, not after the aircraft has been delivered.

A King Air purchase can easily create a six-figure state tax issue. Closing in a fly-away state is helpful, but it does not eliminate tax exposure in the state where the aircraft will be based. Each state has its own rules, exemptions, forms, deadlines and documentation requirements. Some states provide exemptions for leasing, interstate commerce, common carrier operations or nonresidents. Some states also impose aircraft registration fees or property taxes.



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The buyer should understand the sales and use tax plan before closing, including where the aircraft will close, where it will be based and how it will be used during the first several months after purchase.

4. Failing to track passengers and business purpose

The flight log is the most important tax record for an aircraft owner. A closing statement shows that an aircraft was acquired. The flight log helps support how the aircraft was used.

Aircraft buyers sometimes keep incomplete records, especially in the first few months after closing. That can create problems later when the CPA is preparing the tax return or when the taxpayer needs to support the deduction in an audit.

5. Ignoring personal use and SIFL reporting

Many business aircraft also see some level of personal use. Personal use does not necessarily ruin the tax plan, but it needs to be identified and handled correctly.

If the aircraft is owned by a business, personal flights will create taxable fringe benefits. The Standard Industry Fare Level, commonly referred to as SIFL, is a method used to value non-business flights on employer-provided aircraft. Ignoring personal use is one of the easiest ways to create a tax reporting issue.

6. Missing placed-in-service timing

Year-end aircraft acquisitions are common, especially when buyers are trying to secure depreciation benefits for the current tax year. However, signing a purchase agreement or funding escrow does not mean the aircraft has been placed in service.

Generally, the aircraft needs to be ready and available for its intended business use. Delays involving inspections, maintenance, delivery, registration or pilot training can affect the placed-in-service analysis.

This issue is especially important for buyers closing late in the year. If the aircraft is not actually ready and available for business use before year-end, the depreciation deduction may not be available until the following tax year.

Final thoughts

King Airs can provide meaningful business and tax benefits, but the planning should begin before closing. Buyers should not wait until the tax return is prepared to determine whether the aircraft was purchased in the right entity, properly placed in service, used enough for business and adequately documented.

Before acquiring a King Air, business owners should coordinate the ownership structure, state tax plan, flight log process and personal-use reporting with their aviation tax advisor and regular CPA.

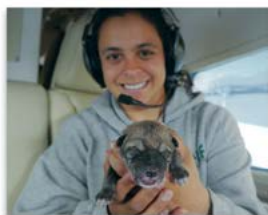
The aircraft may be a powerful business tool, but the tax benefits depend on proper planning and documentation from day one. **KA**

Noah Block, CPA, is a tax advisor at Aviation Tax Consultants, where he helps aircraft owners navigate state and federal tax planning. Based in Chicago, he travels nationwide to attend aviation events, connect with owners and provide guidance on complex tax matters.

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King For a Day

What I'd change about our beloved turboprop if they grant me the crown

by Joe Casey | Photos by Clint Goff

The idea of being king for a day is entertaining in just about any facet of life. You know the concept, right? You say you want to be king for a day and then list the changes you'd make if you had complete control.

I live in Texas and we Texans love our freedom, so you'll only hear us using this phrase when we are daydreaming. Let's have a little fun by applying this to the King Air world: If I could be king for a day at Textron Aviation, what changes would I make to the current line of twin turboprops?

The King Air 360 manufactured today is a far better airplane compared to the King Air 90 that started it all back in the early 1960s. No doubt the research and development team at Beechcraft/Textron Aviation has evolved the King Air lineup through the decades with periods of changes, adaptations and improvements.

I suspect a new King Air of some sort will still be manufactured decades from now and it should be superior to one rolling off the production line today. I look forward to what they develop and would offer the following recommendations if I could be king for a day.

Bring back a better King Air 90

I love the King Air 90, and I believe it has a special place in the market. The Cirrus Vision Jet, TBM 9XX series and Piper M-Class airplanes are all selling well, so clearly there is demand for something smaller than the current production King Air 260. Most buyers in this space are owner-flown pilots and many would prefer a multi-engine airplane that is efficient, has good range and is affordable to operate.

The most recent King Air 90s that rolled off the production line in 2019 were basically the same as those you



Bring back a better version of the King Air 90 – faster and with a higher max differential pressure – to complete the family of turboprops.

could buy a decade or two earlier. There were only minor updates and the market responded to the lackluster love from the manufacturer's R&D department by buying efficient single-engine speedsters. The King Air 90 floundered and the company stopped production. If Textron Aviation were to speak to this situation, they'd probably say that the 90 competed with 2XX sales. But, I'd argue the 90 would have sold well in the past decade had it been upgraded.

If a King Air 90 had a larger psi max differential pressure, it'd sell like hotcakes. A present-day 90 can't fly high without the cabin altitude being over 10,000 feet and that's uncomfortable. But, if they made a King Air 90 with an 8+ psi cabin, installed the biggest small-block Blackhawk PT6 available and included a Garmin G1000 NXi panel, there'd be a line out the door of ready buyers.



Loading and unloading could be so much easier if the King Air's cargo space had a flat floor. Some owners have developed their own solutions like this plywood platform.

Most owner-flown pilots want more than Cirrus, TBM and Piper can offer in their best models. The "more" that King Air offers is an additional engine and a potty. The additional engine is a non-negotiable for some. Casey Aviation provides buyer-agent services to clients and we are dispassionate about which airplane we direct a client to. We listen to their mission, determine their budget and figure out the airplane that best fits their personality. Invariably, some clients say, "I want two engines." For those, the competition for the King Air is a jet. But, for the efficiency-minded buyer, the King Air has severe competition from the single-engine speedsters. The gap in operational costs between a King Air 2XX and a Cirrus jet is huge; a King Air 90 that goes higher and faster would sell.

The potty should never be underestimated by the sales arm of Textron Aviation. It is the game-changer that is not available in any of the single-engine competitors. Cirrus sells well by marketing to spouses via the parachute, pure marketing genius. But King Air has a life-altering device that spouses fully understand and appreciate: a potty. Like a parachute or another engine, the potty is probably not going to be used much, but you know it's there. Its mere existence gives comfort because when you need it, you need it.

Create a flat floor in the cargo area

I love the volume and load carry capability of the cargo space in the King Air. I've literally unloaded the entirety of a fully loaded Chevy Suburban into a King Air and had room to spare. It is fantastic. But the floor slants forward and it is hard to load high without toppling. Everything leans forward, and after the jostling that comes with a normal flight, the contents of the baggage area fall forward and strain against the cargo net. Both loading and unloading could be so much easier if the cargo had a flat floor.

We created a flat floor in our King Air by making a plywood platform. It is a one-off homemade job that meets the intricacies of our needs but is hardly marketable because most King Air baggage compartments have nuance differences affecting fit. I'd have preferred a flat floor from the factory.

Move to Garmin

There, I said it. I know I'm going to get some pushback from pilots who somehow love Pro Line avionics, but I'll take the heat. The Pro Line lovers have probably never flown an advanced Garmin-outfitted airplane if they so ardently love Pro Line.

The proof is in the sales. A huge number of King Air aircraft have been upgraded to Garmin G1000 NXi. Owners are willing to pay more than half a million dollars for the Garmin panel and they are willing to throw the old Pro Line panel in the trash. Have you ever heard of an owner ripping out their Garmin panel to install Pro Line?

Every manufacturer of owner-flown, new-to-the-market airplanes has Garmin in the panel. Garmin has a near monopoly on advanced avionics in the aviation market, and it is an earned monopoly. Garmin is *far* easier to use, provides a lot of offerings that are truly safer and has incredible reliability.

I have no guesses as to why Textron Aviation has not moved to Garmin. If they would, I predict they'd enjoy a huge backorder of airplanes. Buyers want Garmin. Pilots want Garmin. I also think Pro Line lovers want Garmin, but they won't admit it publicly.

Cabin noise canceling

We once had a King Air with cabin noise canceling, and it was incredible. I love noise canceling in my headset, and cabin noise canceling is even better.

When flying that King Air 300 with seven people on board, the pilot in the right seat turned off the cabin noise canceling while fidgeting with the plane's buttons and knobs. Neither of us in the front really cared because we were wearing noise-canceling headsets. But the back seat passengers were startled enough by the sudden increase in noise that they came to the cockpit to ask if we were OK.

I think noise canceling is one of the greatest technological advancements in aviation. If I were calling the shots at the factory, every single King Air would have quality cabin noise canceling.

More comfortable front seats

I don't like the front seats of a King Air. By and large, all King Air seat designs are far too upright especially for tall pilots who need seats that can recline.

I fly a lot of King Air aircraft on ferry flights and training flights. When I take a King Air trip, I've migrated to carrying a small pillow that I can place at the small of my back. That makes it slightly more comfortable, but the seat is still on the "that'll barely do" side of the comfort spectrum.



Joe predicts a surge of orders if Textron Aviation's new King Airs came loaded with factory-installed Garmin avionics versus Collins flight decks.



Let's make the seats and armrests in the King Air cockpit more comfortable and functional.

And then there are the armrests. The older models have armrests that I usually find sagging to the point of being unusable while newer models have adjustable versions that break easily and mostly don't work well. How many times have you crawled into the King Air cockpit only to get an unwanted wedgie from the floppy armrest? At first it is funny and then you're irritated about the design. It'd be very easy for Textron Aviation to reengineer the seats.

Pedals that move easier

I once flew a Diamond DA62 from the factory in Austria to the U.S. and that experience exposed me to a different way to set up a cockpit ergonomically. In a DA62, the pilot seat does not move, but the seat back reclines and the pedals move fore and aft. I'm 6 feet, 3 inches tall and my wife, Deanna, is 5 feet tall. Yet, as we switched seats on the legs across the North Atlantic, we had no trouble setting up the ergonomics for comfort. I've flown that route in a King Air more than 50 times and I will advise that the Diamond is more comfortable than the King Air ergonomically.

It is not only that the ergonomics are superior, but the pilot can better move the controls. In the Diamond, the pilot pushes an electric switch that moves the pedals electrically fore and aft. To move the King Air pedals, you need the flexibility of a Cirque du Soleil performer. First, you have to remove a shoe, then contort your big toe to the side and push the release, and then push or pull on the pedal with the other foot. It might be easy for a gymnast to accomplish, but if you've got men's size 13 clodhoppers, it is no small feat to set the pedals in a King Air.

Better air conditioning

I fly all the King Air models, and the best model for cooling purposes is our King Air B100. Built in 1978, it is an embarrassment to Textron Aviation that Deanna and I play rock, paper, scissors over who gets to fly the B100 over the King Air 350 on a summer day when both airplanes are flying.

The B100 has the air conditioner compressor in the nose area powered by an electric motor, which means we can hook up the airplane to a ground power unit to cool the airplane prior to a flight. The 350 has the compressor on the right engine, so we always start with a hot cabin on summer days.



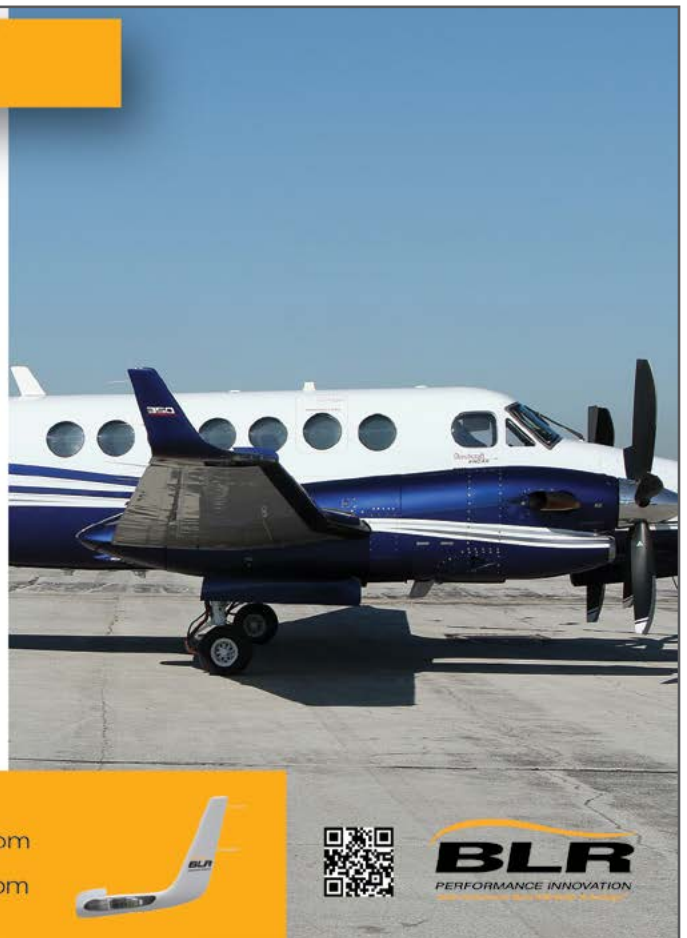
Joe would address concerns with the King Air's cooling system, including relocating the compressor reset for King Air 3XX models from the nose gear bay.

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What improvements would you make to the next King Air iteration?

PHOTO COURTESY: TEXTRON AVIATION

Aside from compressor location, it just seems that the 350 is hotter than the B100 on any given summer flight. The 350, regardless of which 350, cools down much more slowly than other models and that would also be addressed if I were in charge. I'd also explore why in the world the compressor reset for the King Air 3XX models is installed in the nose gear bay. I can't tell you how many times that reset switch pops on the ground while taxiing out for departure, rendering the air conditioner completely inoperative for the entire flight.

The bottom line is air conditioning is so important in any vehicle that has no open windows. I know some buyers who have passed on the King Air simply because the word on the street is that the air conditioning is unreliable at worst and barely effective at best. The word on the street is right – there's lots of room for improvement.

Let's hear from you

That's my list, now I'd like to hear about your ideas. If you could be king for a day, what changes would you implement to make a better King Air?

It's a fun exercise, and your voice might be joined by others to create a chorus that Textron Aviation actually considers. Send your thoughts to joe@flycasey.com or to the King Air magazine editor, melinda@kingairmagazine.com. We look forward to hearing your thoughts! **KA**

Joe Casey is the owner of Casey Aviation, Inc., based at Angelina County Airport (KLFK) in eastern Texas. The company manages four King Air aircraft and provides flight training in many models of airplanes. He has 19,300 hours of total flight time, over 4,500 of which are in King Air airframes. He is a certified ATP-ME/SE commercial pilot with ASES, Rotorcraft-Helicopter/Instrument and Glider ratings. Casey is also a designated pilot examiner (DPE) with many authorizations from Sport Pilot through ATP, CFI-Initial and the BE-300 type rating issuing authority up to the ATP level and holds CFI, CFII, MEI, CFI-H, CFI-IH and CFI-G certificates. He has flown 83 North Atlantic crossings in King Air aircraft.

Textron Aviation Appoints New CEO

On Aug. 24, Textron Inc. announced the appointment of Brian Rohloff as president and CEO of its Textron Aviation segment, effective Aug. 31, 2026. Rohloff succeeds Ron Draper, who simultaneously announced his retirement after more than 27 years with Textron, including the past eight years leading Textron Aviation.

The original equipment manufacturer behind the Beechcraft, Cessna, Hawker and Pipistrel brands called the moves “a thoughtful succession process” and said Draper will remain with the company through the end of the year to support the transition.

Rohloff is a graduate of Wichita State University and joined Textron Aviation in 1997.

“Brian is a proven leader who brings a deep understanding of our business, our products, our customers and our industry,” Lisa Atherton, president and CEO of Textron Inc., said in a news release. “Throughout his 29-year career with Textron Aviation, Brian has demonstrated strong leadership across multiple functions and has built trusted relationships with employees, customers and suppliers. I am confident he will continue to build on Textron Aviation’s strong foundation and drive the business for growth and continued success.”

Rohloff’s career at the company has ranged from director of paint operations to senior product director for the Citation XLS+ and Citation X, then vice president of quality and vice president of sales. His most recent role was senior vice president, customer support, where he led the company’s global customer support operations.

Textron Aviation credited Draper with strengthening the company’s global leadership position, advancing its product portfolio, investing in its people and culture and guiding the business through significant industry opportunities and challenges during his eight years as president and CEO.

In October 2018, Draper took over as the company’s leader, succeeding Scott Ernest, who had been in charge since 2011. Draper joined Textron Inc. in 1999 and came



Brian Rohloff

to Textron Aviation in 2012. He moved into the chief executive role from his position as senior vice president, integrated supply chain.

“Serving as president and CEO of Textron Aviation has been the greatest honor of my career,” Draper said in a news release. “What I will be most proud of is the incredible people who make this company what it is every day. Together, we’ve navigated challenges, celebrated successes and continued advancing aviation while staying true to our commitment to our customers, communities and each other. I’m deeply grateful for the opportunity to be part of this team, and I have tremendous confidence in Brian and the future of Textron Aviation.” 



Eyes on the Med

Malta adds fourth King Air for Mediterranean maritime patrol

by MeLinda Schnyder | Photos courtesy Textron Aviation

The Armed Forces of Malta has operated Beechcraft King Air maritime patrol aircraft for more than a decade and recently accepted delivery of a factory-new, extended-range Beechcraft King Air 360ER as the force continues standardizing the fixed-wing aircraft of its air component.

The Air Wing fleet already includes three King Air 200 models that the non-combat force uses to safeguard Malta's national interests, monitor its area of responsibility in the central Mediterranean Sea and contribute to national and regional security operations.

The work of the Air Wing is shaped by the small island nation's position as a southern border for the European Union. The King Airs operate maritime patrol missions in the Mediterranean Sea including border control, maritime surveillance, law enforcement and search and rescue support.

A chief engineer officer and an air wing avionics engineer representing the Armed Forces of Malta traveled to Textron Aviation facilities in Wichita, Kansas, this summer to accept delivery of the newest King Air procured under a 2025 contract.

Once accepted, the extended-range model then made a transatlantic journey to Aerodata AG in Braunschweig,



Germany, where it is being fitted with an extensive suite of mission equipment and systems integration. Certification and testing in accordance with the Armed Forces of Malta's operational requirements and specifications will follow before the aircraft is expected to enter service in 2027.

The 360ER is the extended-range variant of the King Air 360, offering increased fuel capacity, higher useful load and longer range to support long-distance and mission-driven operations. Adding a King Air 360ER boosts the Air Wing's ability to meet growing operational demands and enhance security and safety across the region while maintaining fleet commonality.

"The Beechcraft King Air 360ER is exceptionally well suited for maritime patrol missions, offering the range, endurance and reliability required to operate across the central Mediterranean," Bob Gibbs, vice president, Special Missions Sales, said in a news release issued during Farnborough International Airshow. "We are proud to continue our long-standing relationship with the Armed Forces of Malta and to support their mission with another proven King Air platform." **KA**

"The Beechcraft King Air 360ER is exceptionally well suited for maritime patrol missions, offering the range, endurance and reliability required to operate across the central Mediterranean."

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UPCOMING GENERAL AVIATION INDUSTRY EVENTS



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2026

- **Sept. 19-20:** National Championship Air Races, Roswell, New Mexico
- **Oct. 8-10:** Beech Party, Tullahoma, Tennessee
- **Oct. 20-22:** National Business Aviation Association Business Aviation Convention & Exhibition (NBAA-BACE), Las Vegas, Nevada

2027

- **Feb. 12-14:** AOPA Fly-In at Buckeye Air Fair, Buckeye, Arizona
- **Feb. 25-27:** Women in Aviation International Conference, Savannah, Georgia
- **March 23-26:** Aircraft Electronics Association International Convention & Trade Show, Savannah, Georgia
- **April 6-11:** SUN 'n FUN Aerospace Expo, Lakeland, Florida
- **April 14-17:** AERO Friedrichshafen, Friedrichshafen, Germany
- **April 22-25:** Beech Bash in the Bluegrass, Mount Sterling, Kentucky (KIOB) – NEW LOCATION!
- **July 26-Aug. 1:** EAA AirVenture, Oshkosh, Wisconsin
- **Aug. 3-5:** Latin American Business Aviation Conference & Exhibition (LABACE), São Paulo, Brazil
- **Oct. 19-21:** National Business Aviation Association Business Aviation Convention & Exhibition (NBAA-BACE), Las Vegas, Nevada

Let us know of additional events at
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