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Bristow Group and Appareo Systems Announce FAA Certification of Innovative ALERTS Flight Data Monitoring System for Light Aircraft

Advanced technology enables step-change improvement in flight safety and dramatic cost reduction in data flight recording

HOUSTON and FARGO, N.D., Aug. 9 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Bristow Group Inc. (NYSE: BRS) and Appareo Systems LLC announced today that the Federal Aviation Administration has certified an innovative new flight data monitoring solution jointly developed by Air Logistics, a subsidiary of Bristow, and Appareo that is the first low-cost, lightweight, fully integrated system specifically designed for small and legacy aircraft.

The FAA has awarded a Supplemental Type Certificate for installation of the ALERTS system -- short for Aircraft Logging and Event Recording for Training and Safety -- in Bell 206 and 407 helicopters.

The ALERTS system includes an inertial sensor suite and a recorder capable of storing more than 100 hours of high-resolution flight data. The ALERTS system also includes powerful 3-D graphic flight replay and analysis software that provides for detailed flight tracking and analysis, including automatic analysis of flight characteristics to determine if the pilot adhered to standard operating procedures during a flight. ALERTS is designed for simple field installation.

"The ALERTS system is a revolutionary technology that will help our company dramatically improve safety performance of our small aircraft, and this technology also has applications in medium-size helicopters," said Mike Suldo, president of Air Logistics, a Bristow Company. "We believe this new technology will improve the safety of the overall industry, consequently, we plan to sell it at a small margin above our cost so that any helicopter operator in the world will be able to afford the device.

"We have been using a high-cost version of this technology in our European fleet for several years, but our smaller helicopters can't accommodate the bulky flight data recording equipment required on the big aircraft. Now we finally have a simple-to-install, low-cost, lightweight version for our smaller fleet. Every customer I have discussed this new safety technology with wants it installed as soon as possible," Suldo said.

"In addition to use in the energy industry, we believe the ALERTS system also has commercial application in a broad range of other industries, including air medical and corporate transportation," said Barry Batcheller, president and CEO of Appareo Systems.

"The ALERTS system is ideally suited for standard configuration helicopters such as the Bell 206 and 407, but it can also be used in S-76s, AS 350s, EC 135s and a variety of other helicopters and light fixed-wing aircraft.

"ALERTS is also a powerful flight training tool that can be easily integrated into existing training programs. For flight instructors, the ability to immediately replay and analyze a student's flights vastly improves flight debriefing and the quality of instruction," Batcheller added.

"Bristow has been a terrific partner in helping us develop this powerful new tool for operators of light aircraft," Batcheller said. "Through our cooperative relationship, Appareo was able to leverage its strong engineering capabilities with Bristow's broad experience in helicopter flight operations management to design and customize a completely new flight data monitoring system that will have groundbreaking safety and pilot training implications for the entire general aviation market."

Flight data recording and monitoring are top priorities for the International Helicopter Safety Team (IHST), which has targeted an 80 percent reduction in the worldwide helicopter accident rate by 2016.

"ALERTS is small, light weight, and affordable -- a high-quality system that will greatly improve operational safety and pilot training programs, especially for smaller and legacy aircraft -- and help helicopter operators reach that 80 percent accident reduction goal set by the IHST," said Dick Healing, former National Transportation Safety Board member and a recognized expert on flight safety systems.

About Appareo Systems

Appareo Systems, based in Fargo, N.D., is a privately held engineering and manufacturing company specializing in inertial measurement and playback systems for general aviation. For additional information, visit http://www.appareo.com.

About Bristow Group

Bristow Group Inc. is a major provider of helicopter services to the oil and gas industry worldwide. Through its subsidiaries, affiliates and joint ventures, the Company provides transportation services in most oil and gas producing regions including the U.S. Gulf of Mexico and Alaska, the North Sea, Africa, Mexico, South America, Australia, Russia, Egypt and the Far East. Additionally, the Company is a leading provider of production management services for oil and gas production facilities in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico. For more information, visit Bristow's website at http://www.bristowgroup.com.

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