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ReadBack



GRUMMAN AMERICAN COUGAR

One of the most dynamic of the General Aviation manufacturers is Grumman American, which has been making great strides with its lineup of single-engine planes. Now the company is developing a

light twin design, designated as the Cougar. It is a four-seater and first flights took place last December. Production is planned in the Grumman Georgia plant. Preliminary evaluation of engines and other components and features are still in progress.

TRENDS IN FLYING

Although the trend in General Aviation business continues good, while the rest of the U.S. economy falters, student starts dropped 13 percent in 1974 from the number for the previous year.

Student starts have been declining since 1966, when there were 160,000. In 1973 there were 131 new students. For 1974 the total was 113,000. This particular category of aviation statistics is often regarded as the barometer of overall growth.

Long-range forecasts by the FAA have indicated more than 1 million pilots by the 1980s. Currently, there's approximately 750,000 pilots with valid medical certificates.

The sale of aircraft and equipment is

strong at the present time. Although prices of new planes have increased on an average of about 10 percent, the demand has not slowed. Prices of used planes are very firm.

Rental rates and instruction costs are rather formidable for pilots. Flying in a late-model rental two-seater can go as high as \$20 per hour wet. Fixed-gear four-seaters range from \$25 to \$35. A new retractable will run from \$35 to \$50. Cheapest new twin rates will be in the neighborhood of \$75. Naturally, older aircraft will rent for proportionately less.

Some of the push behind General Aviation comes from the fact that airlines are reducing their services. Important business travel is turning to executive planes — owned, rented, borrowed or leased.

BEECHCRAFT NEW TRAINER

The first test flight of the proposed Beechcraft Aero Center trainer, called the PD 285, has taken place. Further testing is in progress in order to arrive at a decision on production. The objective, apparently, is a plane with lower initial purchase price and operating costs. Beech reports the PD 285 has shown excellent low-speed flying characteristics.



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SAFETY SUGGESTIONS?

I am sure that at one time or another, everyone of us has had some thoughts or recommendations for making flying easier and safer. I have a recommendation that will cost little and yet will help every flier to know exactly where he is in relation to the runway.

My recommendation is that regardless of the length of the field, a line one foot wide (or other feasible size), be painted on the runway, equivalent to 1/2 the width of the runway at the 1/2 mark and a line at 1/4 the distance from the beginning of the runway regardless of what direction you come in from be painted 1/4 the width of the runway.

In other words, if a runway is 50 feet wide, at the 1/2 point, a line would be drawn 25 feet long across the mid-way point and at the 1/4 point, a line would be drawn 12 1/2 feet long across the runway.

This would help pilots visualize exactly where they are in relation to the length of the runway and would eliminate any fear of floating too long without knowing whether or not there is sufficient length remaining to safely land, and as we all know, if you are not sure, to do a "go-around."

It may be a good idea that if other pilots have similar thoughts on safety, that a special feature entitled, "Safety Suggestions" be adopted in your publication.

Rudolph Markowitz
Jersey city, N.J.

MOUNTAIN FLYING SURVIVOR

Last night I was finally getting time enough to look at some of my old airplane magazines. I was going through PLANE & PILOT March 1974 and came across the mountain flying article. To my surprise there was my plane 2424H where I had pancaked it into the mountain at the 6,200 foot level near Inyokern. My son and son-in-law are beside it. I can assure you that I read every word of your excellent article.

I am one of those few mountain flyers who have come back to fly again. After flying more than 40 search missions, I undoubtedly became overconfident and a sudden wind change without the power or altitude to recover resulted in my accident.

Frances (Bud) St. Louis
Manteca, Calif.

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