



PILATUS PC-24 TAKES FLIGHT

SWISS JET FLIES BEFORE BIG CROWD

The PC-24 “super versatile jet,” produced by Swiss airplane maker Pilatus Aircraft, completed its first flight in mid-May. It was the first business jet to be produced by the 76-year-old company, and nearly 1,800 employees were on hand to watch the historic flight at the Buochs Airport in Stans, Switzerland.

Other than its potential to become a terrific business platform, what sets the PC-24 apart from other bizjets is its wide cargo door and its capability of operating out of short, unimproved airstrips, like the company’s popular PC-12 single-engine turboprop. However, proving the short and rough capability was not the goal for the first flight. Test pilots Paul

Mulcahy and Reto Aeschlimann focused on maneuvers to evaluate the airplane’s handling characteristics, all with the gear down.

Less than 2,000 feet were used for the takeoff run, and the airplane climbed 5,200 feet in three minutes to level off at 10,000 feet. “Everything looks great so far,” Aeschlimann said during the flight. “Beautiful handling. The PC-24 flies just as expected — a real Pilatus aircraft.” The flight concluded after 55 minutes. Pilatus expects to fly approximately 2,300 flight-test hours prior to certification, expected in 2017. The flying prototype is the first of three test beds to be used for the certification effort. — **P.B.**



ACE FLIGHT DECK

PILATUS’ BEAUTIFULLY MINIMALIST ADVANCED COCKPIT ENVIRONMENT (ACE) IS POWERED BY HONEYWELL’S PRIMUS APEX INTEGRATED AVIONICS, WHICH INCLUDE A WEALTH OF COCKPIT TECHNOLOGIES DISPLAYED ON FOUR 12-INCH SCREENS. THE COCKPIT WAS DESIGNED WITH A STRONG FOCUS ON ERGONOMICS, AND THE AIRPLANE IS EXPECTED TO ALLOW SINGLE-PILOT OPERATIONS.