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January 29, 2009

Mr. Barry Davis  
Manager, Aeronautical Information Management  
Orville Wright Bldg. (FOB10A)  
FAA National Headquarters  
800 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Mr. Davis:

**RE: Notam System Improvements**

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), representing more than 414,000 members, have reviewed the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA's) plan to modernize the Notice to Airmen (Notam) system and we submit the following recommendations:

- The updated Notam system should allow pilots to easily access Notams.
- The updated system should ensure that pilots only receive the information that is pertinent to the specific flight.
- The updated Notam system should be designed so that pilots can receive Notam data in formats currently in use today, and pilots should not be forced to learn new Notam abbreviations or formats.

**The Updated Notam System Should Allow Pilots to Easily Access Notams**

Pilots currently access Notam information through Flight Service and Direct User Access Terminal services. An updated Notam system should continue to enable pilots to access Notams through these two options, as well as all of the other means of obtaining Notam information available today. The updated Notam system should also be designed so that in the future, pilots can more frequently utilize graphics and other formats that are easier to use and less cumbersome to interpret.

**Notams Should Be Tailored to the Specific Flight**

Too much information can reduce flight safety, and the updated Notam system should be implemented in such a way that pilots get the information they need for their flight, and no more or no less. As an example, pilots seeking Notam data for a training flight within 15 miles of the base airport should not be expected to wade through hundreds of Notams for airports or airspace many miles away. An updated system should also be able to delineate Notams that may be relevant to the pilot's flight. For example, pilots operating small, piston engine aircraft may not need the same information needed by pilots of large turbine aircraft.

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**Pilots Should Not Need to Be Re-Trained on a new Notam Format**

The updated Notam system should be designed so that pilots can receive Notam data in formats currently in use today, and pilots should not be forced to learn new Notam abbreviations or formats. We are aware of an FAA plan to harmonize formats with ICAO's recommended Notam standards. Because general aviation pilots in the United States generally do not travel to foreign countries with their aircraft, the benefits of the harmonization are difficult to identify.

Harmonizing with ICAO would likely require all pilots to be trained on the new Notam format, a costly and time-consuming effort that could be easily avoided if the FAA designs the future Notam system in such a way that pilots can read the Notam information in the existing format. Resolving this potential issue during the Notam system upgrade would ensure that pilots can continue to access the critical flight information.

As the FAA finalizes their plan to upgrade the Notam system, there are key aspects as outlined above that we urge the FAA to consider. Addressing these concerns now will ensure that the updated system best meets the current and future needs of the general aviation community. AOPA appreciates your consideration in this matter, and looks forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pete Lehmann', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Pete Lehmann  
Manager  
Air Traffic Services