



FAA Receives Recommendations from FSNESS User Group

October 26, 2016

FAA hosted a two-day meeting with the Flight Service NAS Efficient Streamlined Services (FSNESS) User Group on September 21 and 22 in Washington, DC. FSNESS is part of the Administrator's initiative to transform to a more efficient NAS with increased safety and user benefits.

The meeting focused on a data-driven approach to determine whether to sustain, modify, discontinue or add new services to improve efficiency of flight services within the CONUS, Hawaii and Puerto Rico. Possible changes in Alaska will be considered in an upcoming analysis.

The FSNESS User Group includes representatives from Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association (AOPA), Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA), National Business Aviation Association (NBAA), Helicopter Association International (HAI), National Association of Flight Instructors (NAFI), National Association of State Aviation Officials (NASAO), Department of Defense (DoD), Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA), and National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA).



L-R: Phil Poyner (NAFI), Chris Martino (HAI), Mark Kimberling (NASAO), John Kosak (NBAA)

Cindy Moran, Deputy Director of Flight Service, kicked off the meeting by reminding the User Group that some aspects of today's flight services are redundant, obsolete or inefficient and we must modernize the current delivery model. She noted that a significant driver is that voice services constitute a small percentage of the services provided, but at a very high cost to the FAA.

Deborah Lawrence, Acting Weather and Aeronautical Services Group Manager in the Program Management Organization (PMO), thanked the participants in advance for their efforts to provide recommendations for the Future Flight Service Program that will safely meet the General Aviation community needs. Deborah said that the PMO is planning to establish a Future Flight Service Engagement Team to promote collaboration and enable workgroups to target challenges. Examples of specific workgroups under consideration include:

- Research and Analysis
- Technology Development
- Third Party Marketplace Support
- Marketing and Outreach

Rune Duke, Director of Government Affairs, Airspace and Air Traffic at AOPA, coordinated with the other representatives prior to the meeting to discuss proposed changes to flight services and obtain stakeholder input. His leadership was instrumental in the collaborative development of recommendations from the User Group.

FAA participants supported the meeting as subject matter experts and provided an overview of each service, answered questions regarding existing services and helped to identify implementation considerations.

Flight Service and the PMO worked jointly with AOPA to draft and circulate a read-ahead discussion document that outlined the proposed changes along with a description, background, data from AOPA pilot surveys and Flight Service traffic/service demand, and an explanation of obstacles and potential mitigations, if applicable. The 15 recommendations fell into one of these service categories:

- Preflight Services and Pilot Briefings
- Broadcast Services
- Flight Plan Filing and Activation/Closure
- Inflight Services
- Online Web Portals
- Pilot Education and Guidance



FSNESS User Group

The User Group reached consensus on all of the recommendations and will continue to work in partnership with Flight Service and the Future Flight Service Program Office to implement the changes. Some of the recommendations are short-term and easy; others are more complex and require a multi-step solution. The team will work to determine next steps, identify other affected FAA organizations, go through the safety management process, and develop or update policy, procedures and contract language.

A recurring theme in many recommendations is the need for education and targeted outreach to increase awareness among pilots for automated services while continuing to leverage technology to improve those services.

In closing, Cindy Moran said, "It is important that we continue to identify ways to re-scope and negotiate contracts to support the appropriate service levels in the delivery of flight services."
