

PILOT BRIEFING

BY ALTON K. MARSH

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Be a Ford Tri-Motor captain

There's not a lot of demand for a Ford Tri-Motor 5-AT type rating, given that only three of the 13,700-pound aircraft still fly, but nine pilots have completed the course since it was first offered at Arizona's Grand Canyon Valle Airport in 2008.

Ford Tri-Motor N414H is owned by John Siebold, owner of the airport, who once owned Scenic Airlines and Grand Canyon Airlines. His other aircraft include a 1917 Standard J-1, the same aircraft type that landed at the bottom of the Grand Canyon in 1922; a 1928 Curtiss Robin Model 50; a 1929 Travel Air 6000A; a fleet of 1927 Stinsons; and a Stinson Reliant Gullwing. What's going on? Siebold is determined to collect examples of cars and aircraft used to carry Grand Canyon tourists since 1927.

The youngest of the nine pilots is 20-year-old Foster W. Bachschmidt, who says his future in aviation lies in the past. The University of Texas senior completed the type rating in March 2009. Already the owner of an American Legend Cub, he was attracted to the Tri-Motor when he heard it flies like a big Cub. His ultimate goal is to own a Tri-Motor and give rides at airshows such as EAA AirVenture.

He doesn't plan to stop with just a Tri-Motor type rating. He wants to be qualified in the Boeing B-17 bomber as well. "They're running out of pilots to fly them," he said. He wants to be one of a new generation of pilots to fly the old airplanes, no matter how small its numbers may be.

As a day job to support his goals, Bachschmidt will complete his civil engineering degree and work for his dad at DAB Constructors in Inglis, Florida. Chances are good that if you have ever driven in Florida, you have traveled on a DAB road or bridge.



At age 20 Foster Bachschmidt is the youngest Ford Tri-motor captain.

Piper names new president; delays delivery of PiperJet

Kevin Gould is the new president and chief executive officer of Piper Aircraft, replacing John Becker, who resigned and left the company.

Jeff Barger was named vice president of manufacturing operations. Dennis Olcott is the company's new vice president of engineering. Derek Zimmerman will become vice president for supply chain and after-market development. Mary Messuti is Piper's

senior director in Asia, a newly formed position. The company also delayed the PiperJet's delivery date to 2013. When the recession hit, Piper was forced to slow the PiperJet program. With a cash infusion from Imprimis, the jet program was ramped up once again. Piper lost a few jet orders because of the recession but also has gained a few, leaving the total at "...more than 200," said Piper spokesman Mark Miller.