

Phoenix Air receives international award for performance

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Referred to in antiquity as the dark continent, Africa remains a dangerous and inhospitable place at times. For Cartersville-based Phoenix Air, operating in these severe conditions is a daily occurrence leading to their recognition for outstanding performance.

Phoenix Air was recently honored with the Gulfstream Outstanding Flight Award receiving the Albert-Rowley Trophy from Gulfstream Aerospace, an international manufacturer of business-jet aircraft.

In their first year of application, Phoenix Air was selected in the international competition open to all Gulfstream customers. Phoenix Air currently operates 19 Gulfstream aircraft including



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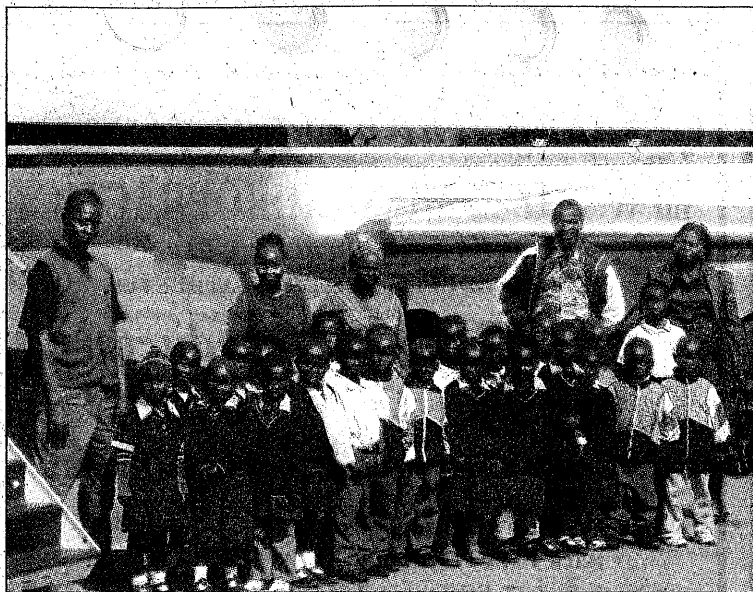
Phoenix Air managers in October were presented the Gulfstream Aerospace Outstanding Flight Award for 2009. Receiving the Alber-Rowley Trophy is Phoenix Air Vice President Randy Davis, Phoenix Air President Mark Thompson, trophy presenter and Gulfstream Aerospace President Joe Lombardo, Phoenix Air Vice President Dent Thompson, Phoenix Air Vice President Bob Tracey and Phoenix Air Director Steve Christopher.

seven Gulfstream jets and 12 Gulfstream G-I's, a twin engine

turboprop, landing them the distinction of operating the world's largest fleet of G-I aircraft.

The Albert-Rowley Trophy is named for the first pilots of a Gulfstream aircraft in 1958 and recognizes each year the outstanding performance of a single aircraft in both the commercial and military divisions. Claiming the commercial award at the National Business Aviation Association annual conference in October was Bartow County's own Phoenix Air for a Gulfstream G-III business-jet under contract providing all U.S. government airlift operations in the continent of Africa.

"We decided that we would enter the contest using one particular aircraft for work that it did in



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Some of the airports in Africa where Phoenix Air lands have never had a business jet land there before, only bush planes. So, it is not unusual for local school children to come out to the airport to meet the flight crew and see their first large airplane.

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Africa during 2009," said Dent Thompson, Phoenix Air vice president and chief operations officer. "We found ourselves in a large room in some very esteemed company with some very large U.S. corporations that have Gulfstreams that do important work and had made an application as well as a number of U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy units that use Gulfstream aircraft in the performance of their work. This was the first time we had ever applied for this award and we knew we were a finalist but we went to the awards banquet happy to simply to be a finalist."

Phoenix Air has held the African airlift contract for about a year and-a-half transporting dignitaries safely to and from their destination. The U.S. government took bids for the project just over two years ago, according to Thompson, when it was decided that the duty was better suited for a private company rather than expecting the U.S. Air Force to act as a taxi service.

"Phoenix Air is principally a government contractor, we currently hold 13 long-term federal contracts with various federal agencies, one of which is this contract in Africa and the main reason is that doing business in Africa is extremely difficult for a lot of reasons," Thompson said citing poor air service, low safety standards, undeveloped infrastructure, health concerns and terrorism. "There's just a lot of problems in Africa these days and the only efficient way the U.S. government can operate in Africa is to use a company like Phoenix Air."

Thompson noted that the



A Phoenix Air award-winning Gulfstream jet sits on the ramp in the Seychelles Islands off the east African coast. The Seychelles sit 1,000 miles east of Kenya and Somalia in the middle of the Indian Ocean.

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Right, pictured in Khartoum, Sudan, is Georgia Sen. Johnny Isakson, Phoenix Air flight attendant Angie Davis, Phoenix Air Captain Brian Edminster, Phoenix Air Captain Jerry Haag, and Tennessee Sen. Bob Corker. All of the pilots and flight attendants working the Africa contract are based at the company's headquarters in Cartersville and rotate to Africa for a month at a time.



application was precisely detailed including supporting documents verifying the aircraft's work and all claims made by the applicant. He also provided an excerpt from the applica-

tion summarizing up the undertaking accomplished by this aircraft and its crew in 2009.

"During this one year period, a single Gulfstream G-III aircraft amassed 902 flight hours cover-

some of the harshest environments in the world. Phoenix Air's 99 percent dispatch reliability is a tribute to the engineering and manufacturing excellence found in all Gulfstream Aerospace products," the application stated.

Attributing this recognition to the men and women responsible for the aircraft, Thompson named several departments dedicated to the mission's success.

"It's a tribute to the entire team, not to any individual groups within the company. It's a tribute to principally our maintenance division who kept this highly complex aircraft in the air. It is a tribute to our pilot corps who flew this airplane into some places that frankly no business jet has ever landed. ... Another group it's a tribute to is our flight attendants," Thompson said,

adding that many people do not typically think of the flight attendants having to work long flights to remote locations. "Another critical thing is that our dispatch department is located here in Cartersville. We have nine people in our dispatch department that work 24/7 and they schedule all of this work."

Although Phoenix Air operates around the globe in various fields including air ambulance services, military training and air cargo, Thompson remarked that locally their operations remain virtually unknown.

"A lot of people in Cartersville, Ga., and Bartow County don't realize that all of the air lift for the U.S. government for Africa is handled right out of the Cartersville-Bartow County Airport," Thompson said.

ing 397,371 miles to 45 countries in the African region all with a 99 percent dispatch reliability factor.

This one Gulfstream aircraft was in almost constant motion for almost a year and operated into