

NewsRelease



National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

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Hampton, Va. 23681-2199

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For Release: November 24, 2003

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RELEASE: 03-081

NATIONAL CONSORTIUM PICKS AVIATION TECHNOLOGY TEST SITE

A public-private partnership, working to develop tools for a better Small Aircraft Transportation System, has chosen the location to test technologies that could improve general aviation and make air travel more accessible to more people.

NASA and the National Consortium for Aviation Mobility are planning a proof of concept demonstration of aircraft equipped with new technologies developed by the Small Aircraft Transportation System (SATS) project at the Danville Regional Airport in Danville, Va. That technology demonstration is scheduled for mid-2005.

Researchers at NASA's Langley Research Center in Hampton, Va., and at SATSLABS across the country are developing integrated airborne systems, cockpit displays and operating procedures for advanced four to ten passenger aircraft. These technologies could help planes safely fly into underutilized rural and suburban airports, including many airfields that don't have radar or air traffic control towers. About 93 percent of people in the U.S. live within 30 minutes of one of these airports.

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SATS research is focusing on four operating capabilities that may help permit people and goods to travel faster and farther, anywhere and any time. These technologies would allow:

- higher volume operations at airports that don't have control towers or terminal radar
- pilots to land safely in low visibility conditions at minimally equipped airports
- increased single-pilot performance
- SATS aircraft to integrate seamlessly into the complex national airspace

Many of the cockpit systems to enable the SATS operating capabilities are already being developed by NASA, its industry partners and other companies. SATS researchers are working to demonstrate that the complex, sophisticated technology can be brought together as an effective, affordable system for smaller airplanes.

The goal of the demonstration is to show that emerging aviation technologies can be integrated into operations in an airport environment and that this new capability may some day allow more small aircraft and airports to be used safely and reliably by more passengers. It will be the culmination of the five-year Small Aircraft Transportation System research project.

For more information about the Small Aircraft Transportation System, please check the Internet at:

<http://sats.nasa.gov>

For more information on the National Consortium for Aviation Mobility, please check the Internet at:

<http://www.ncam-sats.org>