

**Remarks by the Honorable Michael Griffin
NASA Administrator
Small Aircraft Transportation System
Demonstration
Danville, Virginia
June 6, 2005**

- Representative Goode, Administrator Blakey, Admiral Dunn, Secretary Homer and honored guests. It is wonderful to be with you today for this historic demonstration. (Rep. Virgil Goode R-VA; FAA Administrator Marion Blakey; Admiral Robert Dunn, Co-Chairman Small Aircraft Transportation System Strategic Council; Virginia Secretary of Transportation Pierce Homer)
- Flying down here this morning, I was struck by the vital role aviation has played in our history and in our way of life.
- On a June 6th some 61 years ago, nothing less than the fate of western civilization hung in the balance when allied aircraft took complete control of the skies over Normandy, supporting the D-Day assault of Nazi-occupied France.

- Today, we are here to talk about controlling the skies in a much more peaceful, but very important new way.
- To be sure NASA is focusing many of our efforts these days on the Vision for Space Exploration, our strategic plan to send a combination of astronaut pioneers and robotic explorers back to the moon, onward to Mars and beyond.
- But we also hold dear our aviation roots and continue to support cutting-edge research aimed at improving our 21st century air transportation system.
- The Small Aircraft Transportation System -- or SATS -- is about space and a vision too ... airspace and a vision of how technology can change the way people fly ... safely, affordably and efficiently from their community airport to another neighborhood airport less than a thousand miles away.

- The technologies and operating capabilities you will see demonstrated here today could be the precursor of a whole new kind of air travel. One where people can fly where they want, almost any time they want in all kinds of weather. This kind of personalized air travel could dramatically change how we live, how we work, and how we play.
- NASA is proud to be a part of a partnership that will turn this vision into reality. We started in the aviation business ninety years ago, when our predecessor organization, the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics was formed. What you see today demonstrates NASA's continuing commitment to world-class aeronautics research.
- In fact many of the innovations in the aircraft that are already here, especially the newer ones, came from technologies we developed with our FAA and industry partners.
- One of the planes has a ballistic recovery system ...a parachute that can put the plane down safely in the event of a malfunction.

- This concept was tested by our NASA Langley Research Center and the technology is now in the private sector.
- The leading edges of many of the new wings include a stall/spin resistant design certified because of NASA research.
- And just look at the cockpits of these new aircraft. What a difference from the dials and steam gauges so many of us grew up with. We can now give pilots useful information in an easily understood graphical format to improve safety.
- It is worth noting that we started changing the way NASA does some aeronautics research with this SATS project and the Advanced General Aviation Transportation Experiments or AGATE (Ag-Gat) program that preceded it.
- We have collaborated with industry across the country, shared the cost of research, and developed technologies that will further change the way airplane displays look, the way pilots fly and how small aircraft are integrated into the airspace.

- In a few minutes with the help of these giant screens behind us, you will be able to go along for the ride as a virtual co-pilot and experience exactly what the pilots are seeing and accomplishing.
- I happen to be the proud co-owner of a Grumman Tiger. Just looking at some of these new technologies that may soon become available has got me thinking about how I can make some upgrades....and explain the expense to my wife of course.
- As a person who enjoys understanding the technical side of things, I look forward to seeing the SATS technology in action just a few minutes from now.
- I'll be joining all of my fellow airplane enthusiasts in cheering what promises to be another great day in aviation history.
- Thank you all for participating in this promising event.