

NBAA Convention News 2011

MAINTENANCE AND MODIFICATIONS

Frakes In Fifth Decade Of Serving Bizav

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Frakes Aviation, now in its fifth decade, manufactures exhaust stacks for modification companies and original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), but there is a lot more to the company's history than just exhaust stacks.

Founded by Fred Frakes in 1967 and located in Cleburne, Texas, near Fort Worth, the company's original main activity through the mid-1980s was converting piston-engine airplanes to turbine power. Its most significant projects were re-engining of the [Grumman Ag-Cat](#) and [Mallard](#), in both cases replacing the original radial engines with [Pratt & Whitney Canada PT6A](#) turboprops.

Eventually Frakes Aviation (Booth No. C10843) saw the need to diversify and ventured into aftermarket exhaust systems for PT6-powered aircraft. As the airframe modification business dwindled, the exhaust business took hold and Frakes now holds supplemental type certificates (STCs) for exhaust systems on several different airframes. It also is the OEM exhaust provider on some new aircraft, including the [Quest Kodiak](#).

The most recent STC in which Frakes Aviation participated is Blackhawk Modification's re-engining of the Cessna Caravan with PT6A-42 turboprops. Those taking Blackhawk's scheduled demo flights on the PT6-42-modified Caravan from North Las Vegas Airport during the NBAA convention can get a close-up look at the Frakes stacks.

The company still holds a number of airframe modification STCs (and even a couple of type certificates for now-classic aircraft), but, said president Joe Frakes, "We're not really trying to push those projects nowadays. It's just not our core business. Maybe if someone internationally had an older King Air, for instance, we might take a look. But now we refer engine-change business to the companies that specialize in engines, and there are a lot of them out there today."

Frakes Aviation manufactures replacement exhaust stacks for all Beechcraft King Air and Piper Cheyenne turboprop models. These polished stainless steel stacks have proven to virtually eliminate exhaust staining on nacelles and wings and come with a seven-year unlimited-hour warranty. The company holds FAA-PMA and EASA approvals for the stacks, which fly on more than 1,000 aircraft worldwide. Installation is available by approved installers around the globe.

Should a problem arise, Frakes will provide a loaner or exchange stack even after warranty expires, normally within 24 hours, and will repair stacks under warranty or replace any covered non-repairable stack at no charge. All repairs must be made or authorized by the company.