WAAS Avionique hones expertise

STORY BY CHRISTINE KNAUER

At WAAS Avionique in Québec City, Quebec, Canada, avionics technicians Dominic Cayouette and Catherine Bourgie spend the morning installing wiring harnesses for the Garmin G950 flight deck in a Beechcraft 1900D. At least 4,600 feet of wires and cables now stretch end to end on the 19-passenger turboprop.

“It’s a big project,” said Antonela Echague, office manager for WAAS Avionique. “We are the first Canadian company to install the G950 in a Beechcraft 1900D. It’s an incredible update. There are a lot of Beechcraft aircraft in Canada that will need it.”

The new, all-glass cockpit features modern navigation, approach, weather and communications technologies, as well as reduces the empty weight of the aircraft by about 250 pounds. According to the supplemental type certificate, the project takes about 800 manhours of work, which WAAS Avionique has scheduled over four weeks. It’s the kind of project that the repair station’s technicians love to tackle.

“Cockpits are our office,” Echague said. “We specialize in avionics installations, repairs, certifications, maintenance, custom services and more. Whatever the client wants, we do it, we find it, we create it.”

Based at Jean Lesage International Airport, WAAS Avionique also operates a mobile shop to provide avionics services on location for customers. In addition, technicians are on call 24/7 to provide emergency AOG services.

WAAS Avionique’s customers include charter companies, private individuals and government agencies operating piston, turboprops and helicopters. The repair station was founded in 2014 by Jean Boivin, former head of quality assurance for the Governmental Air Service, as the sister company of Chrono Aviation, a charter operator in Québec City, Montreal and Rimouski.

“At first, WAAS was created to help Chrono,”
Echagüe said. “Today, we have outside customers, and all of our clients are important to us.”

The repair station handles avionics installations, maintenance and repair services for Chrono Aviation’s nine aircraft – seven Pilatus PC-12/45 and two Beechcraft 1900D. In fact, the G950 installation Bourgie is installing on the 1900D is for Chrono Aviation.

Both in-house and outside customer projects are divided among two certified avionics technicians and two certified aircraft maintenance engineers.

“Our technicians have an enormous amount of experience – 36 years, 29 years, nine years and five years,” Echagüe said. “Our technicians are motivated and curious. They love to learn and to have all the knowledge for every project. They often work on Pilatus and Beechcraft now, and they are becoming experts on those airframes. They have a lot of

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experience on Dash 8 100-, 200-, 300-series, SAAB 340, King Air 100-, 200-, 300-series, Embraer 100-, 135-, 140-series, ATR 42, 72 (all series), Navajo, and Challenger CL-601 aircraft, too.”

WAAS Avionique is an authorized dealer for most major avionics manufacturers, including Garmin, Aspen Avionics, Avidyne, Universal Avionics Systems Corp., FreeFlight Systems, Latitude, Mid-Continent Instruments and Avionics, Trig Avionics and more.

“We always want to offer our clients the latest trends and technologies, and the best quality instruments and accessories,” Echagüe said. “We are a dynamic and young company, and the employees are motivated. We are looking to expand. We want to maintain a pristine service, so we need the best people with us. They work hard, and we want to keep them happy. We offer a competitive salary and the training and equipment they need. The work ambiance is very cool and fun. We are like a little family. We love working together.”

The 1900D project, which involved installing 4,500 feet of wire and cabling, took 800 manhours and four weeks to complete.