

The Statue of Liberty is shown in a teal color, holding a tablet in her left hand and a torch in her right. The background is white.

AirTraffic

STRATEGY, TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT FOR THE WORLD'S MOST GLOBAL INDUSTRY

Management

State of the Nation

ATCA 2010

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As a special preview for the 55th ATCA Conference and Exposition taking place in Washington DC in October, *Air Traffic Management* came up with a uniform set of questions about ATM, the state of the industry and the best ways to keep moving it forward. Then we sent our questions to some of the key players in North America. This is what they came back with.

State of the Nation

■ **Jack Kies**
President, Metron Aviation

■ **John Jarrell**
Vice President and General Manager,
Sensis Air Traffic Systems

■ **Neil Planzer**
Vice President, Global ATM Solutions
Boeing

■ **Andy Zogg**
Vice President Command and Control
Systems, Raytheon

■ **Todd Donovan**
President and CEO, Thales ATM Inc.

■ **Jack Nager**
Vice President, SRA

■ **John Crichton**
President and CEO, NAV CANADA

Jack Kies, what's your opinion of the condition of the world ATM industry? And North America specifically?

I think on balance there is a greater need for those who identify themselves as air traffic service providers (whether air traffic controllers, or front line supervisors, or even air traffic facility managers) to take a closer look at just what ATM is. There seems to me to be a belief, that if you have worked in a tower or a radar facility, you automatically know all about ATM.

In my experience, nothing could be further from the truth. ATM and TFM is system oriented, and ATC is largely local. I think I should clarify that I believe ATM and TFM are very closely related, where ATC is the more distant cousin. Once aligned with "system thinking" it is very easy to make the shift from ATC to ATM and concurrently TFM. One must appreciate the whole. This includes all of those who operate in a given airspace, and associated tentacles, from pilots to dispatch to operations, to marketing.

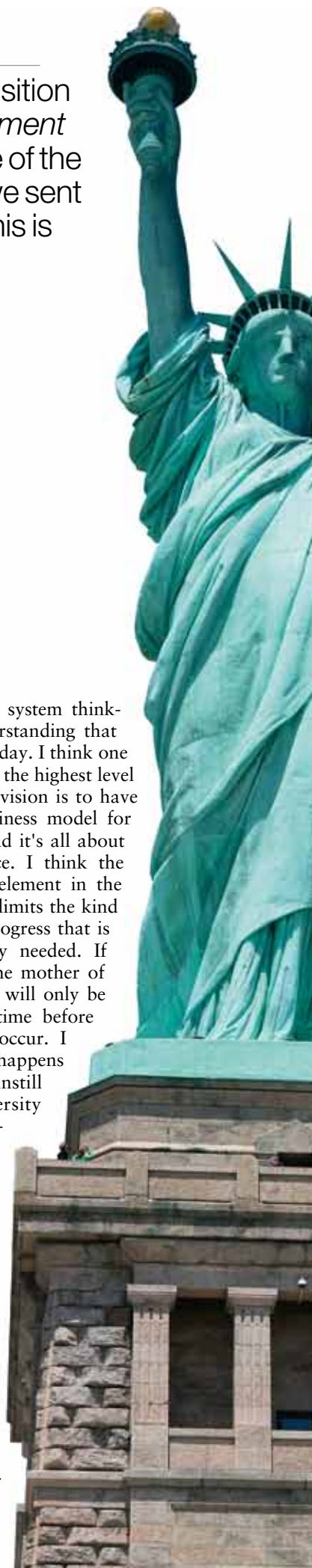
The bias in this last sentence is airlines, but it could as easily be freight haulers, or military operations as well. Each has a business plan, whether a system user, or system service provider. Understanding the needs of all those served is difficult and often fraught with parochialism, bias and worse. There is however a constant move in the direction of collaboration all around the industry. It does seem slow in some parts of the world, and much faster in others.

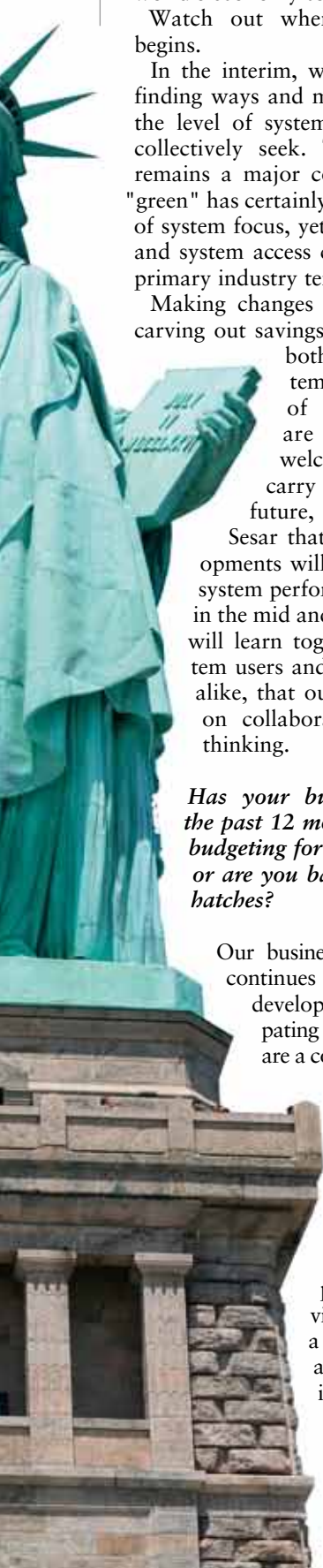
The fact that there are no fences, borders or boundaries (except those drawn on maps) will dictate the speed at which all ANSPs will embrace system thinking and improve the level of services provided. It's frustrating to see an efficient operation in a given airspace, have to lose it because the adjoining ANSP is out of sync with system.

It is efficiency, fuel savings and emissions that will ultimately spawn

the degree of system thinking and understanding that will carry the day. I think one way to ensure the highest level of service provision is to have a similar business model for all ANSPs, and it's all about fee for service. I think the lack of that element in the U.S. airspace limits the kind of forward progress that is so desperately needed. If "necessity is the mother of invention," it will only be a matter of time before these things occur. I only hope it happens in time to instill greater diversity in the industry and not casualties.

Many industries are in shrinkage around the world right now... surely that can't be the case within ATM at a time of such fundamental change... right? Or wrong?





I think you are very right. While many industries are shrinking, ATM is preparing for something of a rush. Traffic is down, and has been for some time. It's likely to take a little longer for it to get back to where it was before the world's economy took a hit.

Watch out when the resurgence begins.

In the interim, we are focusing on finding ways and means to maximize the level of system performance we collectively seek. The cost of fuel remains a major concern, and being "green" has certainly raised a new level of system focus, yet schedule integrity and system access continue to be the primary industry tenets.

Making changes to legacy systems, carving out savings at every turn, for both ANSPs and system users, is the order of the hour. These are necessary, and welcome, but will not carry the day into the future, it's NextGen and Sesar that will. These developments will ensure maximum system performance is achieved in the mid and longer terms. We will learn together, ANSPs, system users and industry partners alike, that our future is hinged on collaboration and system thinking.

Has your business grown in the past 12 months and are you budgeting for growth this year – or are you battenning down the hatches?

Our business has grown and continues to grow as we develop strategies anticipating system needs. We are a concept development organization at the heart and are very focused on how to achieve the sort of change required by new processes, technologies and procedures. We view the entirety of a system. The inside, and all the connecting elements on the outside. We are anticipating rapid and significant growth as NextGen funding begins to take shape.

Which of your products are you most excited about right now? What's the biggest difference we'll see in ATM as a result of one of your products?

Connectivity will be the biggest difference. This will be between the service provider and those utilizing the service, as well as all of the service provider elements. Our Traffic Flow Management Suite allows this sort of activity which is clearly pivotal in changing the old paradigms.

Adding additional pieces such as surface and environment simply better positions all elements to ensure maximum system performance. Nowhere else is this suite of tools available.

We'll see greater surface productivity/efficiency, departure flow management advantages, enroute efficiencies such as an Airspace Flow Tool, and right back down to landing and surface again, all the while keeping environmental aspects front and centre.

What one piece of advice would you drop in the ear of the FAA's Randy Babbitt, given the chance...?

Keep industry involved in charting the future course of the United States National Airspace System. Task Force 5, lead by RTCA was a great example of industry convergence and commitment.

What do you expect most people to be talking about at ATCA?

NextGen, NextGen, NextGen. Then a sprinkle of SESAR.

Who do you see as your customers – ANSPS, airlines, airport authorities, or all of the above? What is special about how you treat your customers?

I view all of the above as my customers. Metron Aviation, has what I believe to be the deepest, most experienced cadre of subject matter experts, who fully understand the myriad nuances our industry is famous for. These folks listen to our customers, understand their needs and translate, from first hand experience, opportunities for improvement.

When operational issues are the focus we provide that level of expertise, once we and the customers are clear about a course of action, engineers and developers are brought in to achieve the necessary fixes. We offer balance, and a solid reputation for on time, on budget, performance.



Jack Kies, President
Metron Aviation

"ATM and TFM is system oriented and ATC is largely local. One must appreciate the whole"

What, if anything, is preventing you doing more business at present? To follow on from that, what single thing, if any, would you change about the industry that would enable you to do more business?

Much of our current business is tied directly to U.S. Government contracts. We are often handcuffed to a budgetary process that is often unpredictable, in terms of timing and numbers. The FAA has endured a continuing resolution for more than 2 years now. This makes planning and progress very difficult, for them and ourselves.

We hear a lot about Collaboration and Interoperability. How can the ATM industry achieve these goals?

Practice, perseverance, practice. There is very little easy when it comes to paradigm shifts of this magnitude. Asking every participant to try doing something different can be arduous, but when the objective can be made in business case terms, a following and support quickly occur. We saw that in 1994 when the very first foray into CDM occurred in the U.S.

Asking airlines to share real time schedule data was a tall order, but with that came a significant improvement in system performance focused on Ground Delay Program activity. The rest, shall we say, is history. We can and should share lessons learned around the world; I look to organizations like CANSO to be a catalyst in this regard. ■