



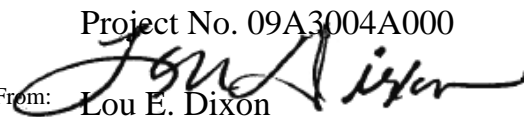
Memorandum

**U.S. Department of
Transportation**

Office of the Secretary
of Transportation
Office of Inspector General

Subject: **INFORMATION:** Audit Announcement -
Oversight of RNP Third-Party Agreements
Federal Aviation Administration
Project No. 09A3004A000

Date: February 20, 2009

From: 
Lou E. Dixon
Assistant Inspector General
for Aviation and Special Program Audits

Reply to
Attn of: JA-10

To: Assistant Administrator for Financial Services
and Chief Financial Officer

Enhancing capacity of the National Airspace System is an important issue facing the Nation. While overall air traffic levels have decreased somewhat in 2008 due to a slowing economy and volatile fuel prices, it is expected that traffic levels will eventually return to—and exceed—the record levels in 2007. Therefore, it is important for FAA to continue to pursue efforts that will enhance capacity and reduce delays, particularly at already congested airports.

A key element for increasing capacity in the short and long term is implementing new flight procedures that rely on equipment on board aircraft. These are commonly referred to as Area Navigation (RNAV) and Required Navigation Performance (RNP). These procedures allow aircraft to fly on any desired flight path without the limitations imposed by ground-based navigation aids.

Since 2005, FAA has published over 150 RNP procedures and plans to publish 300 more by 2013. In an effort to accelerate the implementation of RNP procedures, FAA has entered into agreements with non-Government third parties to design, implement, test, and validate RNP procedures. However, Congress and other stakeholders have expressed concerns about FAA's ability to supervise third-party procedural design initiatives.

At the request of the Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Aviation, we plan to audit FAA's oversight of the development of RNP procedures. Our audit objectives are to:

- assess the extent to which FAA is relying on third parties for the development of new RNP procedures and
- determine whether FAA has established sufficient mechanisms and has sufficient staffing to provide safety oversight of the third parties.

Our audit will include visits to FAA Headquarters and FAA field offices responsible for oversight of third-party agreements. We plan to initiate field work on February 26, 2009, and will contact your audit liaison to schedule an entrance conference. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Robin Koch, Program Director, at (404) 562-3770 or Coletta Treakle, Project Manager, at (202) 366-1494.

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cc: FAA Chief of Staff
Anthony Williams, ABU-100