



Epps Aviation Sales Team from left to right, Warren Cochran, Kristi Cherry and Tom Powers.

## Epps Named Regional Cessna Sales Team Authorized Representative

Epps Aviation has had a long relationship with the Cessna Aircraft Company. That relationship has recently been strengthened through an increase in sales territory naming Epps a Cessna Sales Team Authorized Representative (CSTAR) for Georgia and Alabama for new Cessna single piston aircraft.

As a CSTAR center, Epps directly represents Cessna offering the same pricing structure as found throughout the country and the factory.

"We are pleased that Cessna has the trust in the experience of the Epps sales team to increase our territory to a regional stature," says Tom Powers, Cessna Sales Executive, Epps Aviation. Epps has been a Cessna CSTAR center for Georgia since 1996.

Epps' expert sales team is available to evaluate a pilot's needs to partner them with the most appropriate Cessna aircraft available. The sales team can also assist buyers with financing through the manufacturer as well as insurance. After buying a new Cessna, Epps can help administer the warranty and provide regular maintenance on site.

Among the Cessna aircraft Epps sells are the Skyhawk, Skyhawk SP, Skylane, Turbo Skylane, Stationair, and the Turbo Stationair. The high-performance Cessna 350 and 400, previously manufactured by Columbia, will also be among Epps' offerings in the region.

For additional information on Cessna single piston aircraft or to schedule a demonstration flight, contact the Epps Sales Department at 770-458-9851 x220 or [acsales@eppsaviation.com](mailto:acsales@eppsaviation.com).



### **Kristi Cherry** Epps Sales Representative

In order to fill the demand of the new CSTAR territory Epps has added Kristi Cherry, former regional Columbia Sales Representative, to the Aircraft Sales Team.

Cherry comes to Epps after serving two and a half years as a regional Columbia Atlantic/Southeast sales associate. Her depth of knowledge of Columbia aircraft including the high performance 350 and 400 aircraft, which are now Cessna aircraft, is expected to position Epps as the leading CSTAR in the market.

She is an authorized Cessna 350/400 Instructor, member of AOPA as well as a member of Women in Aviation.

## Epps Reaches Out to Youth

Epps believes in sharing our passion for flight. A long part of our history has been introducing youth to aviation. The future of Georgia's economy is dependant upon continuing interest and education in all aspects of the industry. Epps is proud to participate in programs aimed at targeting the next generation.

As a supporter of the newly formed Transportation Education Foundation of Georgia (TEFGA), Epps joins education, state government and other transportation industry representatives to inspire Georgia's students and promote awareness of transportation industries. The organization uses training programs to influence middle, high school and college students toward exciting transportation careers - like aviation.

Students from area high schools have visited Epps to job shadow in our Service Center, introducing them to careers in avionics and maintenance. Local Chamblee High School has directed many youth towards technical careers through hands-on opportunities like the robotics competition which is supported by Epps Aviation.

Clyde Foreman, avionics professional, serves as Epps' Education and Community Outreach Liaison and is actively involved with TEFGA. He also is serving as the Aviation Technical Committee Chair for the 2008 Transportation Career Expo which will be held in April at the Gwinnett County Airport.

As a continuous supporter of the national Young Eagles program created by EAA, Epps promotes offering future aviators the opportunity to complete their first flight in a general aviation plane accompanied by a licensed pilot.

Since this charitable program began in 1992, more than 1.3 million Young Eagles have enjoyed a flight with volunteer pilots across the country. Many individual pilots based at Epps have become involved in the program as well.

For additional information on these programs: Young Eagles - [www.young eagles.org](http://www.young eagles.org)  
TEFGA – Sonny Cannon – GA Dept. of Education - 404-314-6163 or [gcannon@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:gcannon@doe.k12.ga.us).



"Seeing a child's face light up when they first take to the air brings back the feeling of my first flight,"

-Marian Epps, Epps Aviation.



## Charter Department Upgrades

At Epps Aviation customer satisfaction is a top priority. In order to better serve our loyal Charter customers, Epps has recently made some changes that will make flying with us even more of a pleasure.

When calling to schedule a charter flight, existing customers will notice that Epps' dispatchers have pertinent and preference information readily at hand. Through a recent computer upgrade, we now have a detailed database to ensure that we better and more quickly serve our Charter customers. Whether our customers prefer to have catering, use of limo or rental car services or need us to make hotel reservations, we quickly have this information at hand to ensure that our Charter customers will have a trip that fits their every need.

Knowing that not everyone who schedules a Charter flight is familiar with aviation, flights are now being quoted and billed at an hourly rate. This change should make it easier for customers to understand the costs associated with getting from Atlanta to the destination of their choice. At Epps we are continuously working to ensure customer satisfaction and to provide top notch services to all of our existing and future customers.

To schedule a Charter flight, call 770-451-6715 or email us at [charter@eppsaviation.com](mailto:charter@eppsaviation.com).

## Upgrades at PDK

You may notice while grabbing your favorite sandwich at the Downwind that there have been major improvements occurring around PDK. For instance, the PDK Administration Building built in the 1940's has recently been restored and currently renovations to the complex are underway, providing a better appearance and advanced level of comfort to the airport's customers.

To ensure safety measures on the runway, PDK began a runway safety area (RSA) project which helps prevent personal injury and aircraft damage in the unlikely event of an excursion from the runway. In these occurrences, Epps has been designated by the county to safely remove all aircraft from the field.

With the development of these projects and renovations, PDK demonstrates its commitment to remaining the second busiest airport in the state of Georgia in its number of operations. On your next visit, take time to notice how PDK is working to ensure that its customers will have a satisfying yet safe experience while traveling.

## Service Center Expands Offerings

The Epps Service Center strives to keep customers' aircraft in top working order. Our staff is some of the most experienced and well-trained in the industry. Because of our reputation for excellence, the Epps Service Center has recently received certification to maintain an even wider spectrum of aircraft.

As Atlanta has become an international destination, Epps has welcomed more international customers. We have recently obtained certification by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) to maintain all European Union registered aircraft. This certification will enable the Epps Service Center to serve aircraft from all European Union countries.

Epps has also expanded its services to maintain Cessna single engine and Columbia aircraft while continuing to service a multitude of American and European aircraft, like the Pilatus PC-12.

To make an appointment with the Service Center contact Steve Taylor at 770-458-9851 or [staylor@eppsaviation.com](mailto:staylor@eppsaviation.com).

## Epps Customer Spotlight

### Brenda Lichtenstein



The world of aviation attracts some of the most fascinating people and for some it's their love of flight that makes them so fascinating. In the case of Epps' customer, Brenda Lichtenstein, it's her enthusiasm and positive attitude that make her stand-out in our crowd.

If you spotted Brenda around the Epps lobby, at first glance you'd probably think she was waiting for her pilot to whisk her off to some exotic destination. With closer examination you'd find out that she and her co-pilot were planning one of the 7-8 trips a month she pilots for Industrial Packaging Corporation (IPC), her husband Mark's company.

Brenda's introduction to general aviation came as a passenger on a trip with friends to Hilton Head Island. While most passengers are thrilled with just going up in an airplane, she couldn't help but picture herself in the cockpit. Having raised her family and tired of community volunteer work, she quickly signed up for flying lessons and has been in the air for the past nine years.

Brenda first proved her skills as a pilot by flying the couple to visit their grown children and grandchildren scattered around the country. They have a ball flying their friends around to fun destinations as well.

Today she enjoys a career as the pilot of their recently upgraded King-Air B200 and flies approximately 250 hours a year. Flying has given Brenda more than a job; she says that as a woman pilot she's gained more self confidence and respect. Now she knows she can do anything.

Brenda uses her skills and energies for the greater good as well. She frequently flies for Angel Flight transporting the ill for treatment and was an Angel Flight of Ga. board member for several years. One of her newer interests is with the Veterans Airlift Command where she helps transport injured veterans and their families for medical and emotional assistance.

Looking forward this fascinating pilot says "before I die I want to fly a jet!"

We feel pretty confident she will.

# A MESSAGE FROM PAT EPPS

At Epps Aviation our business is about more than airplanes; it's about relationships. While aviation is my livelihood, it's the relationships with customers who quickly become friends that have built the business over the past 40 years.

The customer pays all of our bills – payroll, rent, utilities and taxes. This reminds me of a very good customer, Al Wickliffe. Al bought a Baron from Epps and always paid his bills on time. Al was from up north, went to GA Tech after WWII and married a local therefore remaining in Atlanta. I picked up information from him either flying to Minneapolis to show him an airplane or at the Downwind Restaurant.

Al was a B-26 Martin Maurader pilot. In 1943 he was sent to North Africa. The second day there Al went to a nearby base to visit his brother, a B-17 pilot. That was the day his brother did not return from his mission. Al's missions included flying his bomber back on one engine and belly landing at his base on Sardinia and later being over France where he had to bail out and spend time behind enemy lines until the Allies pushed through. Al was on the porch waving flags as the U.S. tanks rolled past!

Al had an engineering company in Atlanta specializing in water projects. For some reason one point he made that sticks with me was if it takes \$1 to get 90% of the trash out of the water, it takes \$10 to get 95%, \$100 to get 96%, \$1,000 to get 97%, \$10,000 to get 98%, and \$100,000 to get 99%.

He also pointed out there is no such thing as a corporate tax; it is instead a tax on the customer. The customer pays all the bills and the taxes are just added to the customer's charges. Facts? Close enough.

Al received the Distinguished Flying Cross, air medal with 12 clusters, European medal with 5 battle stars and the French –Croix de e Guerre. He is 85 years old and retired in Navarre, Florida. My adoration and thanks to Al. (He said he was almost an ace – Al destroyed four U.S. airplanes).

In aviation there is no room for error. At Epps Aviation you have our commitment to quality and service. From the lineman to the mechanic, charter pilot, avionics technician and the accountant; everyone at Epps works with the philosophy that serving our customers and friends is our number one priority.

Photo by [taylormultimedia.com](http://taylormultimedia.com)



## Mark Your Calendar!

DeKalb-Peachtree Airport's annual Neighbor Day is scheduled for Saturday, June 7.

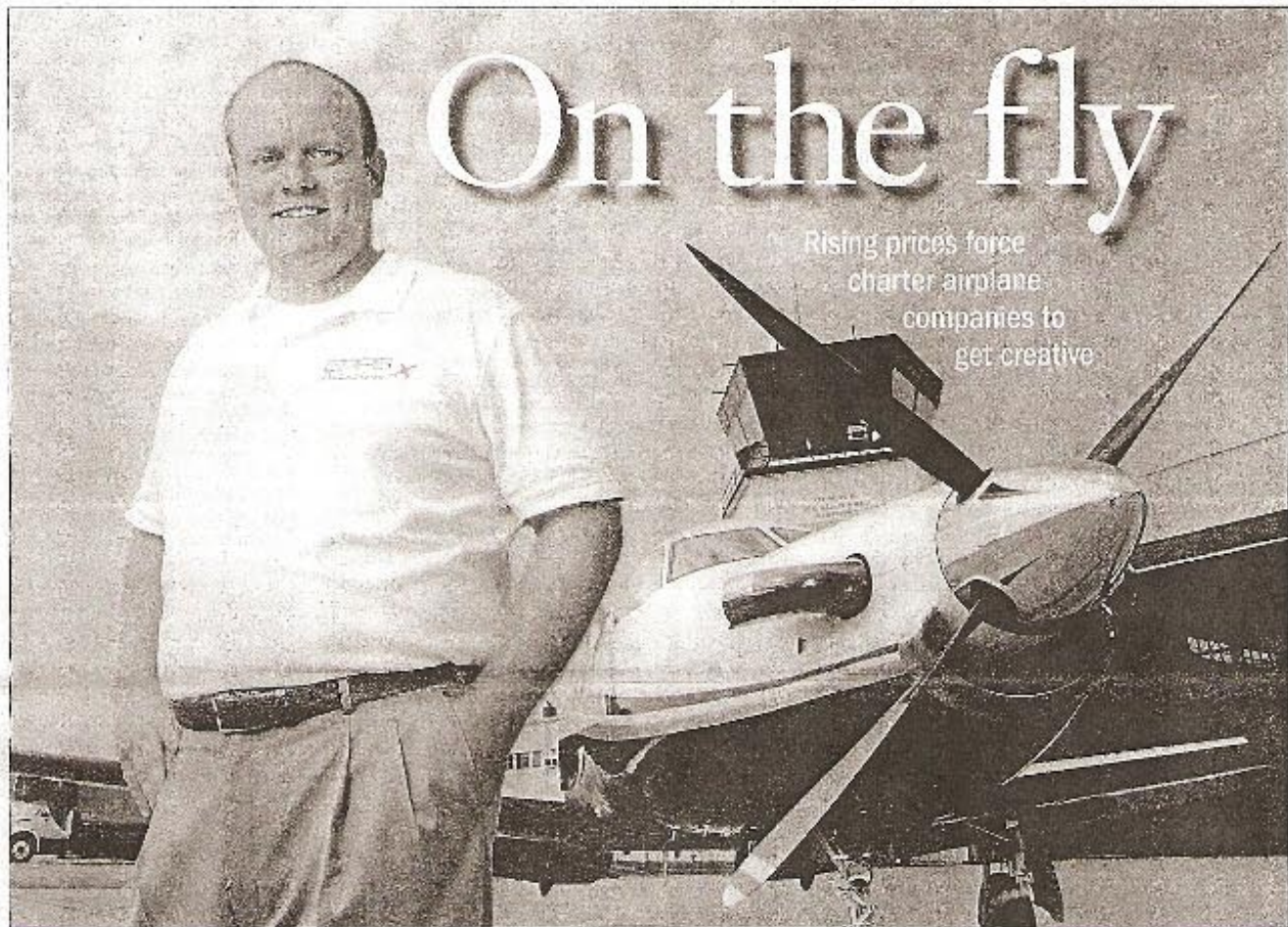
[www.eppsaviation.com](http://www.eppsaviation.com)

Atlanta, Georgia 30341

DeKalb-Peachtree Airport (PDK)

1 Aviation Way





# On the fly

Rising prices force charter airplane companies to get creative

PHOTO BY E. SWAN

**New routes:** Thanks to rising fuel prices, Will Simmons and charter service Epps Aviation, working as a fixed base operator out of DeKalb Peachtree Airport, have found a profitable new niche in a difficult economy. The company is now maintaining and leasing out other corporations' private planes.

By Ray Giller  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

**W**ill Simmons could not just ease into his new job as head of customer management and business development for the charter service at Epps Aviation. He was hired in June with the airline industry in a general panic over fuel prices and there was no time for Simmons to look around and enjoy the view. Simmons, 32, had a plan for making sure Epps' charter business did not suffer like major commercial carriers, and he went to work.

One of the key remedies, Simmons said, will be working with corporations to maintain and lease out their planes, much like the owner of a beach house would use a third-party real estate firm to rent property when the owner is not using it. Another strategy, he said, is for Epps to try and use some of its lighter planes for trips to save expenses. The company, which is a fixed base operator (FBO) at DeKalb Peachtree Airport (PDK), is also using its brand name, which has been around virtually since the start of aviation in Georgia 100 years ago, to attract customers by word-of-mouth.

Then there is the usual remedy of passing rising fuel costs on to customers, and Simmons said rising costs are more easily absorbed by his customers than the typical airline passenger. The results of the strategies is that the trapdoor has not opened under Epps like it has with the major carriers who are cutting routes, laying off employees and reducing services to customers. "Our business is off just slightly, but it has not been a major dropoff because these are business travelers and face-to-face is important for them, and they are still flying," Simmons said.

➤ See ON THE FLY, 3B



**SAFE FLIGHT**

Cost should not be the top factor in choosing an air charter company.

2B



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DAN KOLSER  
4B

**OPINION METER**

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THE PULSE  
5B

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LEADS  
8B





## The road less traveled

Exploring the mind-set of those who strike out on their own

STRATEGIES SECTION B

# ATLANTA BUSINESS CHRONICLE



The 100 names to know in law and accounting  
INDUSTRY FOCUS • SECTION C

## Cox COO says private flight crucial to success 8A

September 28-October 4, 2007

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112 Pages • \$2.00

# Cox COO says private flight crucial to success

By Rachel Tabla Ramos  
STAFF WRITER

Janney W. Hayes, the president and chief operating officer of Cox Enterprises Inc., was the poster child for business aviation during a nearly 30,000-person convention held in Atlanta from Sept. 25-27.

The National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) convened to discuss new federal aviation regulations, challenges facing the industry and the unprecedented growth of private flight.

They also hob-knobbed, showed off new technology and concept planes, and tried to sign deals.

More than 1,000 exhibitors filled two giant halls at the Georgia World Congress Center, and more than 100 planes were on display at Fulton County Airport-Brown Field.



SONNY PERDUE

Hayes got bit by the aviation bug while growing up near South Fulton Airport. When he was only 19, he ambled down to the airport and got his first flight lessons. Within a month, he had 48.6

hours in his logbook plus a pilot's license.

Now, as the president and COO of Cox Enterprises, Hayes sees the company's

At the NBAA, Gov. Sonny Perdue gets a tour Sept. 26 of the new Honda jet from Honda Aircraft Co. President Michimesa Fujino.

25 that was also attended by Gov. Sonny Perdue and U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary Peters.

"From the moment I first went down the runway, I knew I was hooked," he told the NBAA conventioners during a speech on Sept.

planes as a "valuable strategic asset."

Describing the company's aviation history, starting in the 1930s with an open cockpit plane, Hayes said Cox has used airplanes to get quickly to small towns with no access to commercial airfields and big airlines.

In 1939, the company had a Stagger wing. In 1940, a Twin Beech with the tail wing number N-1040, which Cox still uses today.

From 1945 to 1955, Cox had a Lockheed Lodestar, a Learstar from 1955 to 1961, a Gulfstream II from 1961 to 1963, a newer Gulfstream II from 1963 to 1983 and a Gulfstream III from 1980 to 1988.

Today Cox has two Gulfstream V's, and will add a third plane in the fleet in December. The corporate aviation staff is up to 40 people, including mechanics, dispatchers and flight attendants.

"I view our flight department as a critical part of our company's success," he said.

"We use our aircraft as a competitive differentiation, to negotiate or complete acquisitions" and to help get executives home more quickly to see their families, he said.

That, he added, is "priceless," playing on the MasterCard commercial tag line.

Randy Hudson, a former NBAA board member and BellSouth Corp.'s former aviation manager, was also at the convention. He said that BellSouth relied heavily upon a private fleet to get executives to Latin America when BellSouth expanded there.

He said that executives would often fly overnight, sleeping on the planes, to get to Latin America for meetings, then fly home the next night.

BellSouth's fleet was in part sold off and in part moved to AT&T headquarters in Texas, said Hudson.

Meanwhile, at the NBAA convention, Perdue met with officials from Honda Aircraft Co., which is building a world-wide headquarters in Greensboro, N.C.

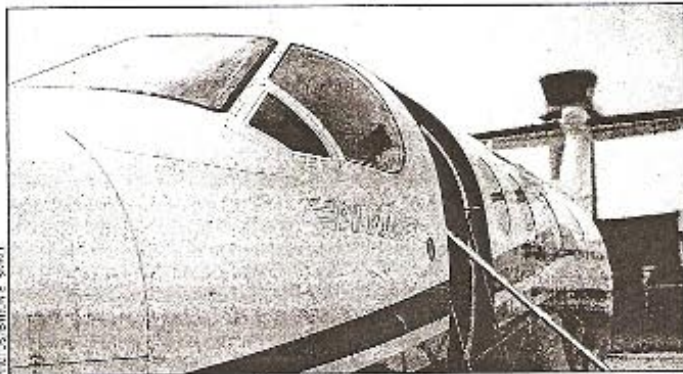
He shook hands with Michimesa Fujino, president and CEO of Honda jets, and then Perdue climbed aboard a model of a new plane that is going into production.

Georgia Department of Economic Development Commissioner Ken Stewart was also on hand, trying to woo Fujino and Honda to consider Georgia for parts-makers or other parts of the manufacturing operation.

The sleek Honda "advanced light jet" on display had room for five, and sells for \$3.6 million.

According to Stephen Keeney, in Honda Aircraft's corporate affairs, they have 100 firm orders and will deliver the first plane in 2010.

Some of the first orders were from Atlantans, but he wouldn't divulge the buyers' identities.



**Lighter load:** Charter companies are utilizing smaller planes to save on fuel costs.

## On the fly

Continued from 1B

According to the National Air Transportation Association (NATA), there are about 221,000 general aviation aircraft operating in the United States with access to 5,000 airports. There are 3,000 on-demand "air taxi" carriers in the U.S.

Epps is a privately held company that does not publish its earnings. In 2007, it flew more than 15,000 passengers. It operates 10 airplanes and manages six out of PDK.

It helps Epps' overall business model that just 15 percent to 20 percent of its business at PDK is through its charter services. The company also resells jet fuel, handles maintenance on planes, does avionics and has aircraft sales.

Simmons said the industries that have been hit hard by the economy, such as real estate and banking, are open to the idea of leasing out their planes through Epps to make sure the companies can hold on to them through lean times.

Epps relies on word-of-mouth for a significant portion of its business, but it also relies on the commercial airlines to drive business.

"James Coyne, the president of NATA, said the airlines are our best friend because they keep the bar so low as far as service that they make us look good," Simmons said. "There really is no comparison because we offer a level of security, efficiency and

confidentiality they can't touch."

Larry Westbrook, the president of Hill Aircraft, an FBO at Fulton County's Charlie Brown Airport, said his business was down 10 percent to 15 percent in June, compared with the same time a year earlier.

One of the reasons Hill's business fell off is it had an airplane out of service, but the costs of fuel and the uncertainty in the airline industry also were a factor.

"We used to change the price every Tuesday, now we just simply go up on it every Tuesday," Westbrook said on July 8. "We are 19 cents more than last Tuesday so we have to decide whether we are going to lose margin or pass it along. That is a business decision we make every week."

Like Epps, Westbrook also said the commercial airlines are helping Hill's business.

"Our business has been driven more by the service we offer than the pricing," Westbrook said. "It has also been driven by security and driven by convenience. So our customers come back to us and don't go to the airlines."

What the charter companies are trying to market successfully is the ability to take a group of business people from one company to an out-of-town meeting for less than the price of going commercial. When an administrative assistant in charge of travel for a company calls, charter companies have to be prepared to show a model that factors in hotel costs, meal costs

and time lost working through the maze of an airline terminal.

Hill recently ferried nine executives of an Atlanta-based Fortune 500 company to Louisville and saved the company \$2,700 compared with what round-trip tickets would have cost, Westbrook said.

"I'm sure we are going to do business with them again," he said.

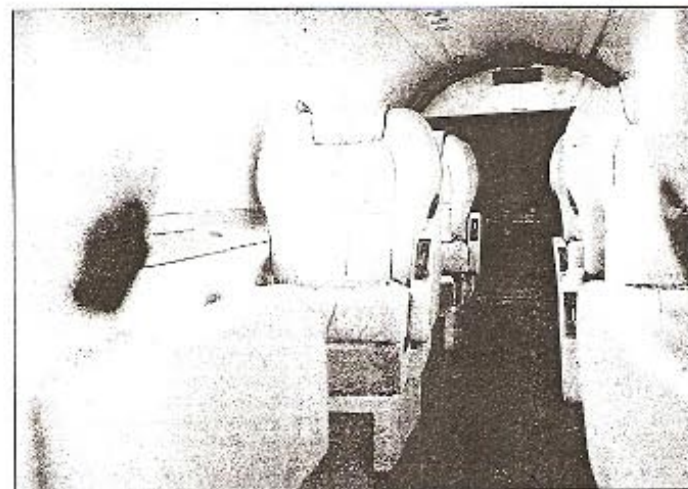
Westbrook said there are 90 airplanes based at Charlie Brown that Hill services, but he is seeing fewer and fewer of them taking off for pleasure trips.

What he is seeing is airplane owners looking for a way to pay for their planes and possibly structuring lease-back deals with Hill.

"I've talked to two companies recently who never would have considered charter, but now they are looking at it as a means of holding on to their aircraft," Westbrook said.

## Strategies for bumpy skies

- ▶ Fly lighter aircraft to save on fuel.
- ▶ Pass the word: The airlines can't provide the same service.
- ▶ Find corporations that want to lease out their planes.
- ▶ Do the obvious: Pass on fuel increases.
- ▶ Charter companies should market to customers that they can fly a team of people more efficiently than airlines.
- ▶ Adopt fractional ownership under which there is shared ownership, an exchange of dry leases (which allows the exchange of aircraft between owners) and use of a management company.



**For rent:** Corporations are leasing out their jets to offset rising maintenance costs.