



Air Care

Dean Atchison bought Spectrum Aeromed in 2007, relocated it to Fargo's Hector International Airport in June 2008 and is continuing to pursue the company's objective of exploiting its 50-plus STCs for more than 260 aircraft models. Atchison is bent on growing the business to meet the health and aviation industries' demands for highly customised air medical equipment.

The air medical and ambulance business has been swiftly grown by 188% in the first nine months under Atchison's wing through attracting more international business and streamlining manufacturing processes.

This is a man with 20 years of banking experience under his belt, including managing a large portfolio of commercial and agricultural lending activities, numerous bank branches and teams of staff. Now he is in the business of saving lives. "We design and manufacture air medical equipment," is the crux of what Atchison is doing now. "This is the equipment that is required to turn a fixed wing or rotor wing aircraft into an air ambulance. We design and manufacture that equipment – from flexible quick change units to highly dedicated fixed installed systems." Spectrum's equipment is installed in a wide range of aircraft, from small turbo prop or business jets (such as Beechcraft, Hawker and Lear) to customised VIP aircraft (such as A320 and B727/BBJ/747s). "The Spectrum team often hears concerns or fears of in-flight emergencies in the executive cabin from VIPs," says Atchison. "One slight, tailored medical interior addition provides them with a new sense of security."

The impetus for the company was a pilot flying air medical missions from Fargo about 25 years ago. Without secure means of attending to patients in the air, the pilot looked for better ways of doing things and drew on his engineering expertise to prototype the first Spectrum Aeromed medical systems. "There was a need to pro-



vide dependable inflight care so he developed a piece of equipment and because it worked so well, it was taken to the marketplace," says Atchison.

Horst Heinicke, Vice President of International

Marketing, explains that Spectrum Aeromed's clients could hail from any part of the aerospace business. "We have clients working with us who are dedicated ambulance providers. But about 30% of our business comes from the additional use of the equipment as an air ambulance. This is our speciality. We provide the quick change unit to convert the aircraft within 30-60 minutes up to an intensive care unit level aircraft which gives the operator the opportunity to retain the utilisation of the aircraft as an executive or VIP aircraft," says Heinicke.

While Spectrum Aeromed manufactures the quick change components, it is down to the customer to install them – but this is achieved with a very light touch without interfering with any of the aircraft structures.

One of the new products now on the market includes Spectrum Aeromed's "short box" air medical module. This is a flexible modular stretcher which contains all the components for critical care transport in compact form. It's designed for aircraft with limited cabin space and single or multiple patient transport needs. Also fresh on the market is the newly designed Medwall component. This provides air ambulance crew with limitless options for mounting auxiliary medical equipment.

This equipment is so advanced that a patient that is undergoing intensive therapy can, once stabilised, be moved from one emergency location to another by air with all the support equipment required by medical teams

usually found in an intensive care unit. This is a very important facility now that centres of medical excellence are being developed in diverse cities around the world, all of which are more easily connected by air than any other method of transport.

So is any aircraft a candidate for installation of this type of kit? "Any aircraft is a candidate for us," responds Heinicke. The company works closely with air medical and transport crews to equip all types of fixed and rotor wing aircraft. Some of the aircraft put forward for quick change air ambulance modification require a higher level of modification than others, he says, referring largely to access to the aircraft where the original purpose of the aircraft was luxury, elegance and comfort. "Medical modules can fit seamlessly into luxury aircraft and have a consistent look – business or aesthetic."

"Each aircraft type requires its own STC," Heinicke confirms. Atchison continues: "One of our areas of expertise is that we have engineers on staff with years of experience of getting these certifications. We have a good relationship with the manufacturers and with the various international regulatory agencies."

Today, Spectrum Aeromed partners with clients around the world, be it from US healthcare organisations, royal families and heads of state, corporations or emergency medical service operators. Often the company works within the context of wealth; but the real purpose of this company is the preservation of health, especially during those times when minutes count.