



EXPANDING GENERAL AVIATION IN CHINA

INTERVIEW WITH **DAJUN LI**, DIRECTOR, XIHUA AVIATION

Interview by Litalia Yoakum

In a move to facilitate the development of civil aviation in Sichuan province, the local government requested Chengdu Aircraft Industrial (Group) Company, a subsidiary of state-owned Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC), to establish the first general aviation company in the province. In 1996, experienced technicians and managerial staff were appointed to set up Huaxi GA Company. After restructuring, the company evolved into Xihua Aviation in early 2017; officially known as Sichuan Xihua GA Company Limited.

What services does Xihua Aviation provide?

At the moment, approximately 30% of aero-surveying missions in the South-Western region are undertaken by Xihua Aviation. A notable amount of our aero-captured geographical data was provided to the Bureau of Surveying and Mapping, Xi'an Research Institute of Surveying and Mapping, Western War Zone and State Bureau of Surveying and Mapping.

Xihua Aviation participated in several rescue and reconstruction missions: Sichuan earthquake in 2008, Lushan earthquake in

2013, and the Sichuan landslide and Jiuzhaigou earthquake in 2017.

The first aviation-police detachment in the Sichuan province was set up under the assistance of Xihua Aviation they execute police service flights such as patrolling, rescue, law enforcement and anti-terrorism. With participation in the anti-terrorist drills and emergency rescue practices, which are organized by the Ministry of Public Security and Sichuan Provincial Public





Security Department, we have built a reputable image in the industry. Moreover, Xihua Aviation is the first enterprise in the country to use 121V-type and Y-12E aircraft in agriculture and forestry missions.

Xihua Aviation is the first GA company located in the South-Western region that simultaneously operates fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft.

What aircraft does Xihua Aviation operate?

Xihua Aviation is the first GA company located in the South-Western region that simultaneously operates fixed and rotary-wing aircraft. Additionally, we are the only GA firm that is equipped with high, mid and low-altitude operation capability. With a stable development, the company is continuously expanding the fleet through aircraft additions with a broader model range. Currently, we are operating a 15-aircraft fleet with seven model types. Fixed-wing aircraft models include King Air 350ER, C90GTI, Cessna 208B, Y5B, and JA600; helicopters models include the AC311 and R44II.

How do you feel about the development of the GA market and its potential?

In 2016, the State Council released "Instructions on GA Development Facilitation", a significant move after perceiving the country's strategic development and trend. CAAC department

supervisors followed the country's steps, delivering a series of reform policies and the provincial government also responded by forming a GA development framework. A remarkable period with immense opportunities and chances, like now, has been long-awaited by generations of industry professionals.

Based on the experience of GA-developed countries, we are optimistic towards the potential of the GA consumption market. At the current stage, the GA market is dominated by government services, such as urban-function safeguards (police and fire fighting), medical services (rescue and medical transfer) and emergency services. Community service has a prominent nature in favoring public interests, and hence, the government has a better capability to carry out the services. When community services are highly correlated with citizens' living standard, the GA acceptance level by the public is raised. Community service growth is beneficial to social equality, which helps push forward the management reformation. Community service requires a secured airport network, which can also be utilized in private flying. When the necessary conditions are gradually fulfilled, private flying can be a customized consumption with favorable prospect.

What were the challenges prior to the government's loosening of restrictions?

Survival.

What is a major challenge of the industry today?

GA is an industry with strong professionalism and high safety pressure. In recent years, the country keeps expanding the support towards GA development, which raises awareness from society and capital inflow to the industry. This creates a great pushing force to the GA sector. Since time and patience are highly required in GA's development, we believe that the major challenge is to strive for an equilibrium between long-term commitment and capital's profit-oriented nature.