

## James Bass President & CEO, Piper Aircraft Corp.

VJLM: Welcome to the Very Light Jet Magazine Interview Series. We are here with the President and CEO of Piper Aircraft Corporation, Mr. James Bass. James welcome to VLJ Magazine.

JAMES BASS: Thank you Bill. Delighted to be here.

I understand you have an engineering background and some engineering experience. Tell us how those experiences landed you at the head of Piper.

I graduated from Ohio State University, and I do follow their football team avidly. I got a degree in mechanical engineering and, after graduating, I worked at General Electric in aerospace for approximately 15 years. After that, I worked in Sony Corporation as the Senior Vice President of their TV business, with 2 billion dollars in worldwide sales. After 7 years at Sony, I became the CEO of Suntron Corporation a 1/2 billion dollar company. Producing products for Avionics, which makes proximity sensors, collision avoidance systems, as well as flight computers for OEM customers included Boeing and Airbus. Virtually all of my background in some way relates to aerospace. Even at Sony we were building all of the FAA flight displays for the towers. So I've always had a leg, or toe, or my whole body in aviation in one way or the other. So now, being CEO of Piper Corporation, I think my background has been very well suited for this position.

They tell us that this "VLJ group" has many names - Very Light Jets, VLJs, Microjets. How do you prefer to designate your jet within the group?

We think we have created an outstanding combination of performance luxury and features that will appeal to a very wide range of customers. While we are a VLJ because of the unique configuration of our plane, ours is more of a sport utility jet. This is a jet that you can go golf on Monday and skiing Tuesday and be at a board room meeting Wednesday. This has great appeal to an enormous number of people with a wide array of mission profiles. We have taken time to research what people want and need. We have tried to design the features in this particular aircraft that will meet the needs of our customers.

PiperJet definitely has the flavor of the traditional Piper, with the low wing design, and I am sure that is a result of quite a bit of research.

The wing design is actually a high speed laminar flow with an extremely low coefficient of drag. It is a completely new wing design and offers a significant amount of additional lift and speed over our current wing designs.

Did you consider composites?

Bill, this will be an all-metal plane and similar to our Meridian or Mirage. It is a technology that we know. It has proven reliability and core strength. This will be an all-metal plane, single engine, with 24000-lb thrust capability. You will see significantly fewer rivets on this plane. We have invested in a new technology offering high strength bonding which we currently use on our wings and we will be applying this to the fuselage. This technology will essentially create a much lighter and higher strength plane.

James, tell us about your sales distribution network. Will you be using your existing sales force that you already have in place?

We will. One of the great benefits we have in creating the alliance with Honda is that we have created a very special distribution network. We established five territories and that will give our customers an unparalleled level of service. These service centers and dealerships will be co-selling both PiperJet and HondaJet collectively. We feel that this will enable our customers to be wrapped in this level of service that they currently do not experience with any of our competitors.

Tell our readership how they can get in touch with Piper directly to find out more about the brand new PiperJet. There are five name dealer networks throughout the US and our website has the contact information at [www.newpiper.com](http://www.newpiper.com).

Thank you for your contribution to Very Light Jet Magazine.  
Bill, it has been a pleasure. Thank you!