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30 Years in, Flying Keeps Pilot for Broncos' Owner Grinning

► For a guy who started flying “just for grins” in college, Greg Kremer has made a pretty good go of aviation since receiving his pilot’s license in 1981. He’s been a flight instructor, charter pilot, commuter airline pilot and, for more than two decades, a corporate pilot. Since 2008, Kremer has piloted longtime Denver Broncos’ owner Pat Bowlen’s Citation X as his latest assignment.

So, Kremer spends a lot of time in the sky, accumulating more than 14,000 hours, and knows quite a bit about jet performance. The Citation X, the fastest civilian aircraft, was a high-performance and stylish aircraft to start, and its become even more of both with the addition of winglets in March 2010, Kremer says.

But Bowlen’s Citation X, serial no. 9, is a workhorse too. The football team owner puts about 250 hours on the plane a year, plus he leases it to the Flight Options fleet and it puts in a similar number of hours there.

Their Citation X Gets Around

Kremer flies the Broncos’ owner to away games during football season and to league meetings as well. “So we’re going from Colorado to Atlanta, to Washington, D.C., to New York, and every once in a while over to the West Coast,” Kremer says.

Based at Centennial Airport in suburban Denver, the Citation X also flies to many other destinations here and abroad. “Most of our flights are domestic, although we do probably half a dozen international trips a year, and those might be anywhere from just going down to Mexico and the Caribbean, once or twice a year we go to Hawaii, and then maybe once a year we go over to Europe,” Kremer says. As with other work on the aircraft, the winglet



installation was done at the Citation Service Center in Wichita. “We’re very happy with our time there, with the service, I’ve been recommending them for a few years,” he says.

Catching the Bug, Netting a Career

During college in Wisconsin, Kremer caught the flying bug from a friend who took him up in a single-engine Cessna. The next year, student loan in hand, he went to the airport and signed up for lessons. He confesses to not telling his parents about flying at first but; surely to their satisfaction, he finished college while earning his license.

Kremer says he “didn’t have any big plans at that point” for aviation as a career, but during his last year of school realized that “this flying stuff was kind of cool.” One step in aviation led to another, from instructor to charters, to commuter aircraft to his current seat in a corporate jet.

Building Up the Blue Book

The Citation X he flies is an early model, and since Bowlen purchased it in late 2007, he has been committed to updating the aircraft and enhancing its value. Installing winglets is part of that commitment. Kremer recalls making

the case to Bowlen about the winglets, which are a collaboration between Cessna Aircraft and Winglet Technology of Wichita.

“I went in there and kind of did this whole little spiel about the performance gains on the winglets,” Kremer says. “Mr Bowlen is a sharp guy and, knowing aviation, he understood it all. But he really sat back at the end and made his own comments. He said, ‘You know, I’ve got an older airplane. It’s no. 9. I gave it a good paint job, I gave it a nice interior, the airframe is clean of corrosion, so anything I can do to keep my airplane modern is just money in the bank to me.’”

“Winglets are a no-brainer from the standpoint of added value making an older airplane stand out from the crowd in the Citation X fleet,” Kremer says. “The Blue Book lists the added value of the winglet as the exact cost of the install, that was quite eye-opening.”

Going Higher on Less Fuel

Although he may have given a “spiel” about winglets, their performance is everything promised.

“We are now flying 2,000 feet higher than

before, all things being equal, and flying faster. And we're saving about 30 gallons per hour on average," Kremer says. "We just came back from London... and that trip really gave us a good show as to what the winglets can do. We were able to go straight up to FL450 and get up to speed and make our coast-out with plenty of room to spare. Just to be able to go from MTOW to FL450 and get up to .86 Mach, ISA+5, was a pretty dramatic change."

The installation by the Wichita Citation Service Center and Winglet Technology was just as stellar, he says. "The whole experience over there with Cessna and with the team there at Winglet Technology, all just great guys, we were especially impressed."

Stellar Performance All Around

In addition to using less fuel and flying higher, the aircraft's range, performance and pilot handling have gotten even better.

"We have a little more range, for example, coming out of Aspen because of how the winglets work. They really knock off that induced drag when the wing has to work hard, high, hot and heavy in those kinds of flights. And, we can depart 1,200 pounds heavier than a non-winglet CX is able to, with all else being equal," Kremer says.

"In all of the CX's I've flown, you have to use some trim on the rudder when you're climbing and descending. With the winglets, you don't touch the trim because of those two extra "rudders" out there on the wingtips, and they even enhance cross-wind control to keep the nose straight," he says.

For a guy who took the controls "just for grins," that kind of aircraft performance is a lot for Kremer to smile about.



QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT:

Wichita Citation Service Center
877-857-4ICT (877-857-4428)

P&WC Issues SB Assistance

► **Pratt & Whitney Canada (P&WC)** has issued CSPN No. 1005183R00 affecting all JT15D-5A and -5D engines, that have not incorporated P&WC Service Bulletins SB 7452 and SB 7444. Both bulletins involve removal and replacement of parts in low compressor sections of the engine(s).

The program duration for the Commercial Support Program Notification (CSPN) terminates Nov. 30, 2014.

Operators who are approaching engine overhaul or are interested in the cost-savings offered by P&WC can refer to the CSPN for details.

Questions, please contact:

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