BELL REVEALS BELL 429 LABORATORY FOR FUTURE AUTONOMY FLY-BY-WIRE OPERATIONS

News / Manufacturer

Bell Textron revealed its Aircraft Laboratory for Future Autonomy based on the Bell 429 commercial aircraft. Developed by Bell Advanced Programs team, ALFA is dedicated to performing flight maneuvers with an aircraft safety system and executing autonomous fly-by-wire flights. The fly-by-wire integration was a critical step in future development of autonomous controls for Bell's commercial aircraft, an emerging technology that aims to reduce pilot workload and enhance safety.

Jason Hurst, executive vice president, Engineering, Bell commented: "Fly-by-wire flight, coupled with additional capability that are being integrated into ALFA, provide a great foundation for Bell to expand on its autonomous capabilities. This aircraft will serve as a flying lab that will inform future autonomous technology development, which we can ultimately leverage to deliver the best rotorcraft solutions to global operators."

ALFA aircraft safety system separates safety functions from flight control functions, allowing for rapid development and evaluation of novel flight control technology without compromising overall safety. The aircraft completed its first flight at Bell's Commercial Assembly and Delivery Centre in

Mirabel, Quebec, Canada and is now being used for further exploration at Bell’s Flight Research Center in Fort Worth, Texas.

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