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For Immediate Release

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Message to House Aviation Subcommittee: Global Industry Requires Global Network

Washington, D.C.- The House Aviation Subcommittee took a major step in the ongoing effort to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) on Feb. 11, 2009, by holding a hearing focused on the newly-introduced FAA Reauthorization Act of 2009 (H.R. 915). Among the issues discussed was the importance of maintaining a global network of FAA certificated repair stations, an issue of great importance to hundreds of small businesses located in the United States.

Mr. Clayton Jones, chairman, president, and CEO of Rockwell Collins, testified on behalf of the Aeronautical Repair Station Association (ARSA) as well as the Aerospace Industries Association and the General Aviation Manufacturers Association.

Jones' testimony focused on several key issues facing the aviation industry, including the implementation of the Next Generation Air Transportation System and stable funding of the Airport Improvement Program. On the issue of foreign repair stations, Jones' message was clear, "Aviation is a global industry and – as such – it requires an international network of safe, secure stations to repair and maintain aircraft."

Further, Jones testified that current language in FAA reauthorization bill could lead to retaliatory measures by foreign aviation bodies—measures that would effectively curtail the ability of American maintenance providers, most of which are small businesses, to engage in the global market. Members of the subcommittee drew attention to the fact that the United States currently enjoys a favorable balance of trade in the aviation industry, a figure that may be altered if protectionist measures remain part of the FAA reauthorization. "The U.S.—European safety agreement will serve as a foundation for future negotiations in areas such as licensing and operations that have huge economic impacts for U.S. industry. To endanger this agreement through foreign repair station legislation risks future economic growth and job creation in our country," said Jones.

ARSA is currently celebrating its 25th year of representing certificated aviation maintenance and alteration facilities. ARSA's 700 members are an important part of the \$9 billion per year domestic air transportation support sector of the U.S. economy. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, this economic sector is responsible for more than 115,000 jobs and a total annual employer payroll of \$3 billion.

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