

# Rep. Jim Oberstar: Sinex Aviation has huge upside

## TWIN PORTS PEOPLE

UP FRONT with  
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From his perch as the leading Democrat on the House Transportation Committee, Rep. Jim Oberstar, D-Minn., says the sky's the limit for Sinex Aviation Technologies Inc., literally.

"Sinex is the most exciting and innovative newcomer in the aviation industry nationally in the last decade," Oberstar said.

"The Sinex technology can reduce paperwork and thereby increase the productivity of general aviation mechanics. Sinex's potential is limited only by the state of the economy and airline finances."

Sinex Aviation Technologies, founded by Duluthian Barry Sinex in 1999 and located in the Duluth Technology Center, has developed an aircraft maintenance tracking software package that, among other benefits, tracks maintenance and announces to airlines and general aviation aircraft owners in advance when certain maintenance procedures must be taken.

Maintenance is one expense that major airlines can't avoid. The only way they can avoid it, Oberstar says, is to retire aircraft, which is being done in the desert in Arizona.

"But of the remaining fleet, which numbers about 5,000, they have to be maintained," Oberstar said.

Oberstar, who has been heavily involved in the aviation industry for nearly 18 years, authored the Aging Aircraft Act that requires a complete teardown of aircraft beyond the D-Check which is required every five years. The legislation, in essence, requires a major teardown of aircraft that are 15 years or older.

Moreover, Oberstar has seen all the processes that the FAA, airlines and companies use, and believes the Sinex products are perfect for the industry.

"One way airlines can save money is to take on the Sinex program," Oberstar said. "If they can, as Barry has demonstrated, save 30-percent of airlines' maintenance costs, including up to \$50,000 in labor costs per aircraft, the airlines should be falling all over themselves for the product and services."

The sooner that airlines can complete maintenance and return the aircraft to revenue service, the better for the airline, Oberstar said.

What Oberstar finds most fascinating about Sinex Aviation, in its evolution, is the company software's ability to help eliminate human error in the maintenance process.

"Let's say in the course of maintenance a mechanic picks up part xyz and enters it in the computer, but the computer won't allow the worker to sign off on it to be mounted in the wrong place," Oberstar said. "This is terrific, and goes a long way to eliminating the human error out of maintenance. This is currently unavailable in the industry."

Oberstar says he's advocated for Sinex with most of the major airlines -- such as Delta, Northwest, US Airways, United and American.

"Sinex simply needs an opportunity to come in and display their wares, to show what their computer systems can do," Oberstar said.

"At present, Sinex is serving only a handful of carriers, but they're already in with some big operations. They've got a proposal pending with three other major airlines.

"I do know that US Airways is testing their software. Then there's all the maintenance repair organizations who monitor maintenance for smaller charter operations, who number in the hundreds."

Oberstar says he's also spoken with Phil Boyer, the president of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, about the Sinex products.

"Phil was genuinely excited about the Sinex product and gave it a



**Jim Oberstar with Barry Sinex, the founder of Sinex Aviation in Duluth. Sinex is on the cutting edge of aviation technology, developing high tech solutions for managing the maintenance of large fleets of aircraft.**

recommendation to their 325,000 general aviation pilots association," Oberstar said.

"Sinex hasn't been able to heavily market to general aviation because they don't have enough personnel to keep up with the current demand for their product," Oberstar said. "But for the occasional flier who flies on weekends, or a couple times a week, who has a computer and needs to track maintenance, they would benefit greatly by the maintenance software."

Oberstar is also impressed with Barry Sinex and how he has been able to grow a vision. "Barry is a modest, understated, soft-spoken person with big-bang ideas," Oberstar said. "And, he's surrounded himself with some very, very sharp people."

Sinex Aviation, Oberstar says, must continue to market its products and services to air carriers, and, then, increase its staff to actually serve their customers.

"When it all hits, they need to be ready to go," Oberstar said.

-- Hanson is founder, editor & publisher of Twin Ports People