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New GM takes the controls at Alpha Aviation

Hot on the heels of receiving Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) certification of its Alpha 160A aircraft, Alpha Aviation has appointed a new General Manager with significant experience in the all-important United States aviation market.

Gretchen Jahn has been appointed to the role, replacing Managing Director Richard Sealy, who becomes the Deputy Group Managing Director of Gregory Australia Ltd.

Ms Jahn comes to Alpha Aviation following a successful stint as the CEO of both the Mooney Airplane Company and the Mooney Aerospace Group in the United States, where in two years, she more than doubled aircraft production and brought two new aircraft models to market.

Alpha Aviation Chairman Graeme Edwards says Ms Jahn's appointment coincides with Alpha Aviation's shift from start up to fully fledged aircraft manufacturer, boosting its ability to compete and succeed on an international stage.

"Gretchen is an influential figure with broad knowledge of manufacturing and the aviation industry. Her appointment gives a huge boost to Alpha Aviation's efforts, as well as the aviation industry in New Zealand as a whole.

"While Alpha has been successful in the start up phase of operation, we are now at the point where our production capabilities need to be seriously reviewed to meet larger than anticipated demand.

"Gretchen will be tasked with significantly increasing production and reducing manufacturing times, while at the same time maintaining our internationally-recognised excellent manufacturing standards," Mr Edwards says.

Ms Jahn says Alpha has done a phenomenal job to date, securing New Zealand, EASA and FAA type certifications in record time while simultaneously receiving the production certificate for its two seat aerobatic aircraft. She also noted the recent expansion of the Alpha Aviation facilities at Hamilton Airport which will assist with the scale up of production.

"I'm inheriting an exciting product range, a recently expanded facility and a very capable team, and I'm delighted to be involved with the company at what is a pivotal stage in its growth and development," Ms Jahn says.

Ms Jahn is also a keen pilot and air racer, with more than 20 years behind the stick, including competing in races such as the Around New Zealand Air Race in 2004 and the United States Air Race Classic, which she won in 2006.

Ms Jahn will step into the role from 1 March.

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