



## Sky-Tec Discontinues Support For Franklin Starters

**Unavailability of suitable OEM components  
causes starter manufacturer to make difficult decision**

**Granbury, Texas - October 15, 2008** - Due to unavailability of suitable OEM components, Sky-Tec can no longer support customers of Sky-Tec's F-Series Franklin Engine starters.

"Sky-Tec has been unable to purchase quality, conforming Bendix/Purolator 'Folo-Thru' - type centrifugal drive assemblies for its F-Series Franklin Engine starters for a number of years now," explained Rich Chiappe, Director of Operations, Sales & Marketing for Sky-Tec. "That component was manufactured by the former Bendix which was later purchased by the Purolator companies. When Purolator shut down the product line down, the source of OEM quality drives dried up nearly immediately. Sky-Tec was able to purchase a limited inventory of NOS drives sparingly since that time. However, that inventory has long since been depleted and Sky-Tec is no longer able to acquire conforming OEM or NOS drive assemblies. Therefore, we have no choice but to suspend support for the F-Series Franklin engine starter line at this time."



Sky-Tec invested tens of thousands of dollars developing and certifying Sky-Tec F-Series starters for Franklin engines in 2000 and 2001. The engines, manufactured at the time by PZL of Poland were gaining popularity with airframe manufactures such as Maule. "The Maule family was busy developing a PZL-Franklin engine-powered M5 and asked us if Sky-Tec would develop a lighter alternative to the 23lb. OEM starter. In response to the request from Maule, we began working on the project in 1998," Chiappe explained. Certification was issued in 2000. Only 150 F-Series starters for Franklin engines were manufactured and sold between its release in 2000 and suspension of manufacturing in 2006. "Frankly, we're pretty sure we never even came close to recouping our development and certification investment on the product," Chiappe shared. PZL shut down the Franklin line about the same time the source of OEM centrifugal drives dried up. Rights to manufacture Franklin engines has been tied up in dispute ever since. Production of new engines has yet to resume under new Romanian ownership and is unlikely to produce significant installed engine volumes in any reasonable time frame.

Owners of Sky-Tec F-Series starters for Franklin engines can continue to receive support for the electrical components of their starters. But support for the centrifugal drive assemblies is no longer available. Sky-Tec has exhausted attempts to find suitable replacement drive assemblies. With no practical way to develop a pro-rated credit for those starters in use, no refund programs are currently planned for owners of Sky-Tec F-Series starters for Franklin engines. However, trade-in credit toward other Sky-Tec products may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

While a complete redesign of the F-Series starter eliminating the need for the Bendix-type centrifugal drive assembly is mechanically feasible, the financial investment is currently unjustifiable given the rapidly elevating costs of development and certification compounded with the dwindling size of the Franklin aircraft engine market.

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