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airline passenger experience association

APEXnews, formerly called WIN, the bi-monthly online source for the latest news and intelligence on the inflight entertainment and communications industry

## Connectivity

*"Inmarsat's global SwiftBroadband service currently gives us plenty of capacity..."—OnAir's Ian Dawkins*

### **Ka-band leaps into focus as JetBlue announces 2012 launch, while OnAir and Row 44 get set to migrate**

***OnAir plans 'a gradual evolution from Inmarsat L-band to Ka-band,' and Row 44 will be ready, but JetBlue leap-frogs L-band & Ku-band***

| **Forest Hills, NY** | US low-fare operator JetBlue sprang a surprise on the connectivity market last week, announcing that it would introduce a Ka-band satellite service in its fleet as early as 2012.

Speakers at last month's APEX conference in Long Beach suggested that they had a minimum of four years to digest the implications of the new technology, which Inmarsat plans to use as the basis of its fifth-generation constellation from 2014. Although that thinking time has now been cut in half, service providers Row 44, OnAir and AeroMobile aren't convinced of the need for hasty action.

The JetBlue service will be made available in North America, supported by a pair of satellites stationed over the continent: the new ViaSat-1, to be launched next year, and the four-year-old WildBlue-1. Both spacecraft belong to Californian satellite equipment manufacturer and service provider ViaSat. JetBlue subsidiary LiveTV will integrate the ViaSat avionics and antenna into the airline's Embraer 190s and Airbus A320s, and manage the WiFi delivery of the service in the cabin.



*'We're pleased with the emergence of Ka-band...'  
—Ian Dawkins*

### **OnAir sets sights on seamless satellite**

Whole-hearted commitment to the Ka-band cause and a fresh emphasis on customer service are two of the hallmarks of the new regime at connectivity provider OnAir.

Talking to *APEXnews* in Long Beach, chief executive Ian Dawkins, who joined the company in June, welcomed the decision by Inmarsat to offer a multi-megabit Ka-band option. He also spelled out his vision of how today's L-band-supported OnAir offering could be used by the airlines to provide a whole new level of customer care.

"We're pleased with the emergence of Ka-band," he said. "Inmarsat's global SwiftBroadband service currently gives us plenty of capacity for our air-ground link. But if some of our airline customers turn out to be very heavy users of bandwidth over the next few years, they will have the option to migrate to Ka-band. We see a gradual evolution from Inmarsat L-band to Ka-band as logical – no other system has the potential for such an integrated, seamless step up from one technology to another."

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