Press Release

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Revolutionary Electric VTOL Aircraft Developments Accelerate

VFS and its members continue to advance
electric vertical takeoff and landing aircraft developments

- 300 eVTOL concepts now catalogued in the VFS World eVTOL Aircraft Directory
- VFS co-sponsoring next week's 14th Annual Electric Aircraft Symposium

Fairfax, Virginia, USA, July 22, 2020 — The Vertical Flight Society (VFS), the world's leading non-profit organization working to advance vertical flight, announces today that it has now cataloged its 300th electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft in its World eVTOL Aircraft Directory.

"Electric VTOL aircraft hold out the promise of being much safer, cheaper, cleaner and quieter," said VFS Executive Director Mike Hirschberg. "The development of these aircraft is part of a larger global trend to support investment in sustainable aviation that continues in spite of the novel coronavirus pandemic."

The Society's Electric VTOL News™ website (www.evtol.news), the first and foremost eVTOL information website, catalogues all known eVTOL aircraft; this comprehensive directory now includes more than 300 eVTOL aircraft concepts — a leap of 50 aircraft since January — representing some 215 different companies/developers. These 300 entries include everything from conceptual studies and defunct projects to aircraft that are currently being flown for certification testing. For the past 30 months, the VFS World eVTOL Aircraft Directory has grown at a steady pace of 100 entries per year — an average of two new eVTOL aircraft concepts are added each week.

Some $4B has gone into exploring the transformative potential of eVTOL aircraft since VFS held the world's first meeting of the eVTOL development community in 2014, which was a launch pad for what the Society sees as an "Electric VTOL Revolution."

Much of the approximately $1B in annual funding for eVTOL aircraft for passenger and cargo urban air mobility (UAM) and other advanced air mobility (AAM) missions is coming from outside of the traditional aerospace industry. For example, Toyota Motor Corporation has invested some $394M in US-based Joby Aviation (bringing total outside investment to $720M) and Hyundai Motor has pledged to invest $1.5B in its UAM efforts. In Germany, Lilium has now raised $376M from investors like Baillie Gifford, Tencent and Atomico, while Volocopter has received $140M, largely from transportation companies like Daimler, Geely and DB Schenker.

Next week, on July 28-30, VFS is co-sponsoring the Electric Aircraft Symposium (EAS), organized by the Comparative Aircraft Flight Efficiency (CAFE) Foundation (www.vtol.org/eas). The 14th Annual EAS will be a virtual symposium with three-dozen speakers. The 12 panel discussions will cover not just eVTOL aircraft, but also recent electric conventional (eCTOL) and short takeoff and landing aircraft (eSTOL) aircraft developments. Other expert panels will discuss battery-electric, hybrid-electric and hydrogen fuel cell power; test and certification; market dynamics and two first-mover electric-aviation markets.

On Oct. 5-8, VFS will hold its 76th Annual Forum & Technology Conference (www.vtol.org/forum) — the largest vertical flight technology conference in the world. This virtual technical meeting will feature some 230 technical papers over 40 sessions, complemented by VIP speakers from industry and government, and an extensive online exhibit hall. Forum 76 includes dozens of talks and exhibits on eVTOL/AAM.

VFS is focused not just on the aircraft but also the broader "ecosystem" necessary to support the broad adoption of eVTOL aircraft. The Society is holding its 3rd Workshop on eVTOL Infrastructure for UAM (www.vtol.org/infrastructure) on Sept. 1-3, 2020. This virtual meeting is dedicated to addressing infrastructure challenges and plotting out a plan of action — in collaboration with industry and government stakeholders — to advance eVTOL development.

"We need to prepare now for the urban mobility needs of the future," said Michael Dyment, Managing Partner of NEXA Capital, which has partnered with VFS to support eVTOL advancement. "Now is the time to plan, design and invest in the aircraft, air traffic management and infrastructure required for UAM. Infrastructure alone is worth $19B between now and 2040." NEXA's subsidiary, UAM Geomatics (www.nexa-uam.com), provides an interactive web portal to 75 city profiles around the world that contains data on thousands of heliports, future infrastructure needs, and overall passenger demand.

VFS was founded as the American Helicopter Society in 1943 by the visionaries of the early helicopter industry, who believed that technological cooperation and collaboration were essential to support this new type of aircraft. Today, history is repeating itself with VFS playing a similar role helping to advance today's revolutionary VTOL aircraft. Over the past three-quarters of a century, VFS — the world's only membership organization that spans the global civil/military and manned/unmanned vertical flight community in industry, governments and academia — has played a key leadership role in advancing the industry.

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