Press Release

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The University of Maryland and Pennsylvania State University Take Top Honors in the 30th Annual AHS International Student Design Competition

ALEXANDRIA, VA – The AHS International Student Design Competition Steering Committee announced that The University of Maryland came in first place in the 30th Student Design Competition graduate category with "HeliX," a variable diameter tiltrotor concept, while Georgia Institute of Technology's "Sterna" compound helicopter captured second-place honors.

In the undergraduate category, The Pennsylvania State University's "Griffin" tiltrotor aircraft won first place and Texas A&M University came in second with its entrant "The HealCopter," also a tiltrotor.

Best New Entrant was also awarded to Texas A&M University's HealCopter undergraduate design. This year, an Honorable Mention for Best New Entrant was awarded to an individual student in the graduate category to Kiran Ganesh, who graduated from Auden Technology and Management Academy in Bangalore, India, with his entry "Kurara," a rotor-in-wing vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) aircraft.

Eurocopter was the sponsor of the 30th annual competition, which rotates among AgustaWestland, The Boeing Company, Bell Helicopter Textron, Sikorsky Aircraft Corp., and Eurocopter.

The AHS Student Design Competition, which challenges students to design a vertical lift aircraft that meets specified requirements, provides a practical exercise for engineering students at colleges and universities around the world. The competition promotes student interest in vertical flight technology. Each of the first- and second-place winning teams is awarded a cash stipend and two members of each of the first-place winning teams are invited to AHS International's 70th Annual Forum and Technology Display, to be held May 20-22 in Montréal, Québec, to present the details of their proposal. Members of the teams receive complimentary registration to the Forum, the vertical flight industry's principal professional technical event, promoting vertical flight technology advancement.

The 2013 Student Design Competition challenged students to design The HealCopter, a helicopter aimed at rescuing victims of a natural disaster. It must be capable of reaching the scene of the disaster rapidly with a large payload. It also requires equipment for the helicopter to operate safely.

The consequences of a severe earthquake in China in 2008 were dramatic, hitting areas with high population density which were difficult to access both because they are located in mountainous areas

and because the earthquake destroyed the existing infrastructures. Rescue efforts were deployed internationally, but they encountered major difficulties for multiple reasons. First, the roads were completely damaged or blocked off by landslides, so that emergency aid could not be distributed via the roads. Second, the extreme terrain conditions precluded the use of helicopter evacuation in many cases. As a consequence, there were numerous examples of population being stranded in their demolished village for several days without food and water before rescuers could finally arrive. Authorities ordered the deployment of more than 150 helicopters, but they appeared to not be adapted to the specific atmospheric conditions (fog), leading to some accidents. Satellite images provided some help, but it appeared that the means used to rescue the population were not satisfactory. It is common belief that at least one natural disaster will happen in the world every year. The 30th Annual SDC RFP addressed that issue.

For those interested in more information about the AHS Student Design Competition please visit our website at www.vtol.org/sdc. The top-winning entries from the 30th Student Design Competition are posted on the site, along with previous winners. This webpage also features the Request for Proposal for the 2013-2014 AHS Student Design Competition, sponsored by AgustaWestland in collaboration with Advanced Rotorcraft Technology, for an X-VTOL.

The American Helicopter Society (AHS) International is the world's premier vertical flight technical society. Since its inception in 1943, AHS has been a major force in the advancement of vertical flight. The Society is the global resource for information on vertical flight technology. It provides global leadership for scientific, technical, educational and legislative initiatives that advance the state-of-the-art of vertical flight.

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