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HAI Applauds Utah Rotor Pathway Program Rollout

Alexandria, Virginia (August 19, 2019) – Helicopter Association International (HAI) applauds Utah Governor Gary Herbert on his administration’s official rollout of the Utah Rotor Pathway Program. The program provides rotor-specific aviation classes to high school students by teaming up with industry, high schools, post-secondary schools and other stakeholders.

“The rollout of the Utah Rotor Pathway Program is a testament to Lt. Governor Spencer Cox’s leadership, dedication of the Governor’s Office Economic Development (GOED) and Talent Ready team, along with our industry and education partners stepping up to build out this program in less than a year,” said HAI Vice President of Government Affairs Cade Clark. “This program is working because Utah has leaders in industry, education, and government willing to think outside the box, willing to step up, and get involved.”

The Utah Rotor Pathway Program provides the opportunity for universities to team up with a local high school to teach rotor-specific aviation flight training and technician classes, where high school students learn basic ground school material and gain college credit in the process. High school students will also have opportunities to work with industry partners in a variety of roles, such as job shadowing, internships, and mentoring. Once students graduate from the university system they then can have an opportunity to interview with the industry partners.

Though the Utah Rotor Pathways Program is only in the initial stages of implementation, the program already boasts more than 40 members representing 22 different program partners, ranging from local helicopter operators focusing on air medical and heavy lift, to universities, flight schools, tour operators, and local government agencies.

Clark first approached the Utah governor’s office last year to brief the administration on the helicopter industry in Utah and its workforce shortage. In meetings with Cox and staff representing the Governor, Clark discussed the 2018 Helicopter Foundation International (HFI) study that documented the problem and outlined findings from the HFI-sponsored HeliFutures forums, where industry stakeholders met to discuss their efforts to attract and retain pilots and maintenance technicians.

The rollout on Saturday, August 17, coincided with the grand opening event of the Cedar Valley High School - The Aviators – in Eagle Mountain, Utah. This school’s students will be some of the first to benefit from the Utah Rotor Pathways Program as they are teamed up with two program members, Southern Utah University (SUU) and Utah Valley University (UVU).

Matt Zuccaro, President and CEO of HAI congratulated all the program members for their commitment to teaching the next generation of rotor pilots and technicians and thanked the elected officials of Utah for their strong leadership and willingness to fund educational opportunities that connect Utah’s citizens with technical careers in an industry that desperately needs them, while supporting Utah’s aviation industry.

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HAI is the professional trade association for the international helicopter industry. HAI's 18,000 members represent 1,800 aviation businesses, and safely operate more than 4,500 helicopters approximately 2.3 million hours each year in more than 73 nations. HAI is dedicated to the promotion of the helicopter as a safe, effective method of commerce and to the advancement of the international helicopter community.