

Another 'Impossible Dream' Achieved In Human Powered Helicopter Challenge

STRATFORD, Connecticut - Sikorsky Aircraft Corp. today congratulated AeroVelo Inc. in Toronto, Canada, for a flight that has won the AHS Igor I. Sikorsky Human Powered Helicopter Competition, a feat that brings a Sikorsky-sponsored prize of \$250,000. Sikorsky is a subsidiary of United Technologies Corp. (NYSE:UTX). AHS and Sikorsky Aircraft presented the award at a special ceremony today at The Soccer Centre in Vaughan, Ontario where the record-breaking flight was conducted on June 13.

The Toronto-based AeroVelo (derived from the word aerodynamic and the French term for bicycle) team is led by Dr. Todd Reichert, pilot and chief engineer, and Cameron Robertson, co-chief engineer. The team, comprised largely of students at the University of Toronto, beat the 33-year old challenge last month, flying its "Atlas" above 3 meters (9.8 feet) and hovering for approximately 64 seconds. Officials from the American Helicopter Society (AHS) International verified the flight data over the past few weeks and concluded it meets all of the criteria necessary to win the competition.

The AHS first issued the human-powered flight challenge in 1980, with an initial prize of \$10,000. Since then, many teams have attempted to meet the objective of creating a helicopter that could rise three meters and hover over a 10-meter-by-10-meter box for one minute using only human-generated power.

"When Sikorsky increased the prize to a quarter-million dollars in May 2009, many people were skeptical and felt the challenge was impossible," said Mark Miller, Vice President, Research and Engineering for Sikorsky. "And that is exactly why we raised the stakes – to encourage creative thinkers to prove that what is considered impossible is often proven to be possible. That has been the philosophy of Sikorsky Aircraft since the founding of our company by aviation pioneer Igor Sikorsky 90 years ago. Congratulations to the AeroVelo team!"

"This is an incredible accomplishment," said Mike Hirschberg, executive director of AHS International. "For a third of a century, the AHS Sikorsky Prize has eluded the best minds and technology available. The technological and theoretical advancements achieved in pursuit of our challenge have been astounding."

"The past two years of the competition have been very exciting, with several teams racing to best one another, and more flights than the previous 30 years combined," said Benjamin Hein, Chairman of the AHS Igor I. Sikorsky Human-Powered Helicopter Committee and a senior engineer at Sikorsky Aircraft.

More than 20 human-powered helicopters have been designed and built since the competition began, though only a handful have gotten off the ground. Recent teams contending for the prize include the University of Maryland's Gamera and the California Polytechnic State University team with its Upturn aircraft. The most successful competitors from the 1980's and 1990's included a student team at California Polytechnic State University with its DaVinci III helicopter and the team at Nihon University flying the Yuri I, which previously held the world HPH endurance record at 19.5 seconds.

AeroVelo's Atlas vehicle is the largest human-powered helicopter to have flown, and the first in Canada, with each of its four rotors measuring nearly 70 feet. The airframe is constructed of very light carbon tube and polymer weighing only 115 lb, with a highly modified bicycle frame pedaled by the pilot. It first flew in August 2012.

Sikorsky Aircraft Corp., based in Stratford, Conn., is a world leader in helicopter design, manufacture, and service. Its Sikorsky Innovations group, part of Sikorsky's Research & Engineering organization, develops advanced rotorcraft concepts and systems, including X2 Technology®, which has proven its ability to double the speed of today's helicopters.

United Technologies Corp., based in Hartford, Conn., provides a broad range of high technology products and support services to the aerospace and building systems industries.

AHS International, based in Alexandria, Va., is the world's premier professional vertical flight technical society. The organization brings together industry, academia and governments to tackle the toughest challenges in vertical flight.