



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

VA VERTICAL
AVIATION
INTERNATIONAL
POWERING UP

MEET VAI



Vertical Aviation International (VAI) embraces the diversity of aircraft and professionals in vertical aviation worldwide. We represent the interests of all who operate, build, fly, fix, supply, or support vertical aviation aircraft.

TAGLINE: Powering Up

VISION: To be the world's most vital membership association leading the evolution and expansion of vertical flight

PURPOSE: To fuel the growth of the vertical aviation industry through connection, education, advocacy, and safety so that communities around the world are strengthened by the power of vertical flight.

VALUES: Trust / Passion / Service / Innovation / Inclusion / Safety



Your Questions Answered

Q. *Why did you rebrand to VAI?*

A. To be the world's most vital membership association representing the entire vertical aviation industry, we must grow our scope to include all forms of vertical flight. Uniting as an industry will strengthen our power to advocate. Working together, VAI members will strengthen communities around the world through the power of vertical flight.

Q. *Are helicopters still important to the association?*

A. **Absolutely!** Helicopters will continue to play an important role serving communities around the world, and VAI is proud to represent the people who build, operate, fix, fly, support, and supply them!

Q. *Who made the decision to rebrand the association?*

A. The Board of Directors, in support of Strategic Initiative 1, which directs the association to “unify the industry around a new vision of vertical aviation.”

Q. *How were the new name, logo, colors, and other brand aspects chosen?*

A. The association engaged an agency with expertise in rebranding associations. Over the past 18 months, the branding agency has done research, collected data based on member surveys and interviews, and worked with the Board of Directors and staff to develop our new brand. Each element of the new brand—the name, vision, purpose, colors, tagline, and even the

new name for our annual trade show, VERTICON—received unanimous support from the Board of Directors.

Q. *Aside from the name, what else will change?*

A. Our members can expect VAI to continue to provide the same services they currently receive, with no change in dues at this time. There is complete continuity of leadership by the VAI Board of Directors and staff.

Learn more: Rotor.org/newbrand

A Leader in Every Seat

The team of professionals who get the work done at VAI believe in the importance of collaboration, mutual respect, and outstanding service to members. VAI's culture of empowerment puts a leader in every seat, recognizing that we have much to learn from one another and that diverse perspectives lead to better outcomes.

Staff contact information appears throughout report.

Government Affairs

John Shea, senior director, government affairs
Chuck Street, Western US regional representative
Josh Rousseau, Northeastern US regional representative
Katia Veraza, manager, government affairs and regional relations

Executive and Administration

Sarah Arnold, director, corporate affairs and corporate secretary
Brandon Thompson, executive assistant and administrative liaison

Marketing Communications

Gina Kvitkovich, senior director, communications
Jay Clark, IT director and web contributor
Katerina Bedoya, director, marketing
Bailey Wood, director, strategic communications
Dan Sweet, assistant director, strategic communications
Jayne Wood, assistant director, publications and media
Shawna Kerns, assistant director, marketing
Phyllis Utter, graphics manager
Jaasmin Foote, manager, social media
Christine DeJoy, senior editor
Andrew Parker, copy editor
PJ Barbour, video and multimedia producer
Mashiyat Ahsan, research and data analyst

VAI Leadership



President and CEO James A. Viola, Chief Operating Officer Michael Hertzendorf, and Chief Government Affairs Officer Cade Clark.

Member Services

Chris Martino, senior director, operations and international affairs
Charlotte Zilke, senior director, membership and conventions
Chris Hill, senior director, safety
Greg Brown, director, education and training services
Zac Noble, director, flight operations and maintenance
Tanya Kirchner, director, conventions
Teresa Farmer, director, membership
Emily Monahan, manager, exhibits and experience
Ashten Brown, manager, operations
Erin Sweeney, exhibits specialist
Linda Jackson, membership and data coordinator
Alyssa Miller, conventions coordinator

Finance

Wayne O'Brien, manager, finance
Mirian Montano, finance manager, operations and accounting
Rigels Mema, finance assistant

Partners

Zena Curry, HR director, Marcum LLP
Teresa Poirier, HR and payroll generalist, Marcum LLP
Tom Glista, safety manager, Crown Consulting
Racheal Moses, marketing sales, The Wyman Company
Katie White, exhibit, sponsorship and advertising sales,
 The Wyman Company

VAI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2023–24 Board

Nicole Battjes, Chair

Mark A. Schlaefli, Vice Chair

Rick Kenin, Treasurer

Brian Jorgenson, Assistant Treasurer

James A. Viola, President and CEO

Sarah Arnold, Director, Corporate Affairs
and Corporate Secretary

Paul Gottwig, Director, Government
Service

David McColl, Director, General Aviation

Randal R. Rowles, Director, Commercial

Stacy Sheard, Director, Commercial

Robert Miller Stallings, Director,
General Aviation

Jonathan Daniels, Special Advisor –
Emerging Technology

Francois Lassale, Special Advisor –
International

H. Bryan Brewer III, Legal Advisor



VAI Board members take a break from their board meeting in Anaheim, California, for a photo op with a Sikorsky UH-60A Black Hawk owned by SCA Group. From left: Randal Rowles, Stacy Sheard, Paul Gottwig, James A. Viola, David McColl, Sarah Arnold, Mark A. Schlaefli, Nicole Battjes, Brian Jorgenson, Rick Kenin.

We are excited to share with you our 2023 Annual Report, the first publication bearing our new name and brand. Your Board of Directors was clear in its vision for the future: as a membership association, we needed to be inclusive of the increasingly diverse fleet of aircraft capable of vertical or short takeoff and landing, and the entire ecosystem that builds, supplies, flies, fixes, operates, or supports them. Our new name clearly shows our expanded scope. We are Vertical Aviation International.

We announced our new name at HAI HELI-EXPO 2024 in Anaheim, California. We chose to announce at the show because, each year, it becomes the center of the vertical aviation universe. And our theme, Building Tomorrow, perfectly aligned with our reasons for rebranding.

In a sense, we returned to our birthplace to be reborn. The association was founded in California at AF Helicopter offices in Hollywood Burbank Airport (KBUR). We believe that our founders—all helicopter operators and fierce competitors—would support our decision to expand the focus of the organization. They understood the power of working together for the good of the industry.

As you will read, 2023 was busy, not only with rebranding efforts but also with activities recognizing our 75th anniversary year.

Through it all, staff continued providing outstanding support to members while making progress on our 2023–25 Strategic Initiatives (see page 16).

One accomplishment worth highlighting: Membership grew in 2023, including the addition of 24 students who joined through our new Student member category and 5 aviation law firms that joined to offer their services through our new Legal Directory. We anticipate even stronger growth in 2024 as word spreads about our robust suite of benefits for all operators, manufacturers and suppliers, pilots and aviation mechanics and engineers, aviation professionals, and students.

You'll also find staff teams and handy contact information listed on relevant pages. The repetition of names on the teams shows the collaboration that's a hallmark of this high-functioning organization. We are proud of the quality and quantity of work this staff of 36 accomplishes.

Keep reading to discover how VAI served the industry in 2023 and how your fellow members benefited from VAI services. We encourage you to follow their lead and make the most of your VAI membership and benefits!



Nicole

Nicole Battjes
2023–24 Chair
VAI Board of Directors



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Viola', written over a light blue background.

James A. Viola
President and CEO
VAI

INDUSTRY COLLABORATION

VAI provides platforms where our industry meets to foster global collaboration.

Highlights

- **International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).** As the lead organization of the International Federation of Helicopter Associations, VAI served on eight ICAO advisory panels and working groups to address topics including workforce development, training and licensing, infrastructure design standards, and instrument flight procedures.
- **AAM Industry Advisory Council.** VAI assembled this 17-member advisory group of advanced air mobility (AAM) leaders to help facilitate AAM integration into the US National Airspace System. Its members contributed to VAI's *Roadmap of Advanced Air Mobility Operations*, which was released at HAI HELI-EXPO 2023 and has since gained global attention as a foundational playbook.
- **Working Groups.** Topics that VAI's 14 working groups addressed included restricted category aircraft regulations and aircraft equipment certification, the integration of small uncrewed aircraft systems and electric vertical takeoff and landing aircraft into the industry, and workforce development.
- **International Representation.** VAI President and CEO James Viola represented industry at a wide array of international events, including serving on a panel at ICAO's Air Navigation World 2023 conference in Canada and keynoting the inaugural International Conference on AAM Systems in India.

Key Metrics

- ↑ **250+ industry volunteers** serve on VAI's 14 working groups
- ↑ **18 associations/advisors** participate in the VAI International Partnership Program
- ↑ **11 international regulatory/standards** groups on which VAI staff serve
- ↑ **25 FAA and US regulatory/standards** groups on which VAI staff serve

Contact Your VAI Operations Team

Chris Martino, senior director, operations and international affairs

Zac Noble, director, flight operations and maintenance

Ashten Brown, manager, operations

Operations@verticalavi.org

RWSI Benefits from VAI's Global Reach

Despite hosting the inaugural International Conference on Advanced Air Mobility Systems (ICAAMS-1) in December, India has struggled to develop its vertical aviation industry. Only 254 civil helicopters operate in the country—smaller than the fleets of some operators. The Rotary Wing Society of India (RWSI) is working to unlock India's skies and promote the benefits of vertical flight, which remain mostly inaccessible to the world's fifth-largest economy.

Organized by RWSI and the Vertical Flight Society Asia/Australia Region, ICAAMS-1 focused on vertical aviation's future in India. In support of RWSI, which is a member of VAI's International Federation of Helicopter Associations (IFHA) and International Partnership Program (IPP), VAI President and CEO James Viola delivered a keynote on safety regulations and was a panelist on Day 2 of the conference.

"RWSI has been pursuing ways to resolve bottlenecks in India's regulatory and infrastructural framework. Expansion of the helicopter industry would improve connectivity, especially in remote areas, and add to economic activities," says Indian Air Force Air Marshal (Ret.) Arvindra Singh Butola, RWSI president.

"Membership in IPP and IFHA has been a help in finding possible solutions. It provides us a platform where issues can be discussed with global experts."

Butola also emphasizes the importance of collaboration: "In IPP meetings, I realized the helicopter industry the world over faces similar problems, although scale may vary. It is interesting to see how different regulatory bodies handle issues."

“In an ever-globalizing world, it is pragmatic to work together and find common solutions.”

— Arvindra Butola



VAI President and CEO James Viola keynotes the inaugural ICAAMS-1, organized by the Rotary Wing Society of India, in Bengaluru, India.

RWSI Photo

CELEBRATING **75** YEARS OF SERVICE

VAI will always be there to support the important business functions of our members, especially in times of need.

THAT WAS THEN

1974 – VAI established a Public Relations Advisory Committee to help drive the growth of the industry and ensure that the public saw helicopter operations in the best light.

THIS IS NOW

2023 – VAI benefits from 14 working groups, all of which provide valuable insights to tackle issues that challenge the industry at large or are specific to an industry sector.

Your membership powers VAI's ability to represent the concerns of our industry.

Highlights

- **FAA Reauthorization Bill.** Many VAI-endorsed priorities made it into the House-passed version of the bill, including increased funding for aviation workforce programs, performance-based safety solutions, safe integration of uncrewed aircraft systems into the national airspace, and improved low-altitude route infrastructure.
- **Community Compatibility.** VAI worked with government representatives in Northern Virginia and Washington, D.C., on a sound complaint-tracking system, resulting in the FAA changing helicopter routes and altitudes to reduce the impact of helicopter sound in affected neighborhoods.
- **Indianapolis Heliport Initiative.** VAI led a campaign that helped members submit comments opposing the closure of the heliport.
- **International Outreach.** VAI expanded its relationships with Brazil and Chile by holding monthly calls on legislative on issues affecting the helicopter industries in those countries.

Key Metrics



10+ state aviation associations developed relationships with VAI, expanding our impact at the state level



92% win rate for VAI-endorsed high-priority amendments in the US House's FAA reauthorization bill (44 out of 48 received House approval)



400+ bills tracked, with VAI successfully stopping a number of burdensome and anti-industry regulations

Contact Your VAI Advocacy Team

Cade Clark, chief government affairs officer

John Shea, senior director, government affairs

Katia Veraza, manager, government affairs and regional relations

Advocacy@verticalavi.org

Chuck Street, Western US regional representative

ChuckS@verticalavi.org

Josh Rousseau, Northeastern US regional representative

JoshR@verticalavi.org

VAI Scores Big Win for AAM in FAA Reauthorization Bill

Collaborative efforts between VAI and its members led to key provisions for the advanced air mobility (AAM) industry in the US House of Representatives' FAA reauthorization legislation (H.R.3935), including classifying vertiports as a subset of heliports and ensuring access is determined by performance and not propulsion type.

During the reauthorization process, VAI worked closely with members of its AAM Industry Advisory Council, including Eve Air Mobility. A spinoff of Embraer, Eve Air Mobility is developing an electric vertical takeoff and landing vehicle along with agnostic services, operational support, and an advanced traffic management solution.

"FAA reauthorization is a unique opportunity to ensure the FAA is focused on this industry in a very meaningful way. Proper staffing and resources, timely rulemaking, certifying aircraft, advanced air traffic management, research and development—these are some of the areas we advocated alongside VAI and others to prepare for the industry's long-term success," says Matthew Land, head of government relations and public policy for Eve Air Mobility.

In June, Land participated in a congressional briefing during a pivotal phase in the reauthorization process. He credits VAI with giving its members a seat at the table. "We need to work together to solve the challenges ahead," says Land.

“Experts advocate for this industry as a whole and think through what’s beneficial for all of us so it can really, truly take off.”

— Matthew Land



Eve Air Mobility's Matthew Land makes a point during a congressional briefing on AAM in June. VAI Chief Government Affairs Officer Cade Clark is at far right, second row. (HAI/Jaasmin Foote)



Eve Holdings, Inc. Photo

CELEBRATING **75** YEARS OF SERVICE

VAI has been a stalwart representative of the vertical aviation industry before local, state, federal, and international governments.

THAT WAS THEN — THIS IS NOW

Feb. 23, 1950 – VAI (then the California Helicopter Association) made its first official lobbying effort to gain more favorable legislation and regulation for the fledgling industry.

VAI will continue to advocate on behalf of all vertical aviation sectors. Top priorities include: FAA reauthorization, air tour operations, infrastructure, AAM, workforce development, community compatibility, and international outreach.

VAI MEMBER BENEFITS

Powering You

VAI's robust slate of member benefits—which will continue to expand in 2024—helps VAI members connect, grow, and prosper. And remember, every employee of a VAI member company also receives member benefits!

Connections



- Volunteer for VAI working groups that address industry issues
- Get press coverage in VAI's daily e-newsletter
- Promote your organization in VAI media at discounted member prices
- Enjoy member pricing to attend exhibit at VERTICON and other VAI events

Advocacy



- Direct access to VAI technical, regulatory, and legislative staff
- Legislative resources and updates

Support for Individuals and Businesses



- Tools for promoting and protecting your business
- Health insurance for groups and individuals through LIG Solutions
- Loss-of-license insurance for pilots by Lockton Affinity
- Discounts on employment listings on JSfirm.com
- Legal resources portal and Legal Directory
- Flight Training and Checking Program with Helicopter Institute



Contact Your VAI Membership Team

Charlotte Zilke, senior director, membership and conventions

Teresa Farmer, director, membership

Linda Jackson, membership and data coordinator

Member@verticalavi.org

Safety



- Third-party hazard reporting and event resolution (ASAP)
- Customizable flight and maintenance risk-assessment tools
- BowTieXP risk-assessment software
- SafetyScan Global Accident and Incident Research Program
- Discounts on safety management system (SMS) software from 4 industry-leading providers
- SMS maintenance program
- SMS Coaching and Assessment from WYVERN
- Safety awards for pilots, operators, and aviation mechanics/engineers



Education



- Scholarships for rotorcraft pilot and maintenance students
- VAI Online Academy courses for rotorcraft professionals at member-only prices
- In-person education for rotorcraft professionals during VAI events
- Purdue Global tuition discount (up to 20%)
- 30% discount on King Schools courses



**Coming
in 2024!**



- **Flight Data Monitoring (FDM) with Hands-On Support**
- **Operational Risk and Resilience Accreditation (ORRA) Program**

Check rotor.org/benefits to See Our Latest Member Benefits!

Elevating safety is key to VAI's mission and intrinsic to our industry's success.

Highlights

- **SMS and ASAP Programs.** Saving \$10,800 through VAI member-only discounts, 16 operators got safety management system (SMS) solutions, software, and coaching and third-party management for FAA-approved Aviation Safety Action Program (ASAP) activities.
- **SafetyScan.** This global database of rotorcraft accidents and incidents expanded to include 7,216 official reports from eight countries.
- **Elevate Safety Program Certification.** Work began on updating our legacy Accreditation Program of Safety, with extensive industry research and VAI member surveys.
- **SOS series.** The highest performing episode of the monthly Spotlight on Safety (SOS) series was "Use Your Superpower," with 11,200+ views on all platforms.
- **Flight Training and Checking Program.** With \$16,300 saved through member-exclusive discounts, 16 operators got their crews back in the air faster with aircrew training, testing, and certifications provided by VAI partner, the Helicopter Institute.

Key Metrics

- ↑ **64,246 views** for *56 Seconds to Live* video
- ↑ **50 pilots completed** *56 Seconds to Live* online training course
- ↑ **113 downloads** of VAI Framework for Safety Guidebook
- ↑ **17 safety awards** presented to VAI members for achievement of significant safety milestone
- ↑ **68 pilots and operators** took the Land and LIVE pledge to put safety first in uncertain flying conditions

Contact Your VAI Safety Team

Chris Hill, senior director, safety

Tom Glista, safety manager

Safety@verticalavi.org

End of an Era: Capitol Helicopters Completes HAI-APS

HAI's Accreditation Program of Safety (HAI-APS), a cornerstone of VAI's safety services, is built on two sets of standards: International Standard for Business Aircraft Operations (IS-BAO) metrics and helicopter mission-specific standards (HMSS). Sacramento, California-based Capitol Helicopters was eager to take advantage of HAI-APS because it combined both.

"Capitol's approach has always been focused on becoming industry leaders and holding ourselves to higher standards," says Paul Kargus, director of safety. "HAI-APS gave us a roadmap to reach our safety performance goals."

Capitol Helicopters completed HAI-APS in 2023, integrating program elements across the company. "By adopting the program, we boosted our safety culture and continually achieve high audit scores," says Kargus.

Chris Hill, VAI senior director of safety, applauded the achievement, saying, "We are proud to recognize Capitol Helicopters as one of the last VAI members to go through our safety accreditation program as it's been known. We will be launching a retooled program at HAI HELI-EXPO 2024."

In response to members' feedback, the new Operational Risk and Resilience Accreditation (ORRA) Program is easier to implement and earn accreditation, says Hill. Based on an operator's existing safety management system, ORRA focuses on managing risk using shorter, more understandable checklists. Operators can still choose to meet IS-BAO standards if desired, but it is no longer required.

"Safety culture doesn't just happen," says Hill. "It takes commitment. ORRA provides a clear path for improving processes across any organization."

“Achieving accreditation is sure to prepare any organization for what the future may hold.”

— Paul Kargus



In completing HAI-APS, Capitol Helicopters achieved accreditation in HMSS for External Load & Heavy Lift and Pipeline and Power Line and IS-BAO registration.

Paul Kargus/Capitol Helicopters Photo

CELEBRATING **75** YEARS
OF SERVICE

VAI continues to develop safety programming and best practices for the vertical aviation industry to carry out its missions.

THAT WAS THEN

Feb. 24, 2014 – VAI launched its Land & LIVE campaign at HAI HELI-EXPO® in Anaheim, California, encouraging pilots to make the precautionary landing and stop the accident chain.

THIS IS NOW

Land & LIVE has been adopted globally, with 300+ pilots and operators taking the Land & LIVE pledge in the last 5 years.

EDUCATION AND EVENTS

VAI programs help vertical aviation professionals connect and grow.

Highlights

- **VAI Events.** Members attending HAI HELI-EXPO 2023 in Atlanta, Georgia, saved nearly \$3 million in registration, education, and exhibiting space fees.
- **Online Professional Development.** VAI awarded 750+ WINGS, AMT, and IA renewal credits through its education programs in 2023.
- **Workforce Development Working Group.** Members met quarterly to discuss ways to address pilot and aviation technician shortages that threaten operational readiness.
- **Rotor Pathway Programs (RPPs).** Springboarding off the success of the Utah RPP, VAI launched the North Dakota RPP with the University of North Dakota and industry and government partners to help high school students in that state prepare for vertical aviation careers.
- **Scholarship Program.** VAI awarded 9 scholarships to rotorcraft pilot and maintenance students to pursue further training.

Contact Your VAI Education Team

Greg Brown, director, education and training services

Ashten Brown, manager, operations

Education@verticalavi.org

Education Key Metrics

HAI HELI-EXPO 2023



650+ attendees participated in 27 professional education courses



3,200 attendees took part in 50+ Rotor Safety Challenge sessions



800 attendees received technical updates from 20 OEM presenters

Events Key Metrics

HAI HELI-EXPO 2023



Atlanta, Georgia, USA

12,404 attendees / 639 exhibitors / 97 countries



Aerial Work Safety Conference

Boise, Idaho

365 attendees / 40 exhibitors / 3 countries



EUROPEAN ROTORS

VTOL Show and Safety Conference

(produced by VAI)

Madrid, Spain

5,409 attendees / 231 exhibitors / 80+ countries

AWSC: A Unique Blend of Education and Networking

VAI's annual Aerial Work Safety Conference (AWSC) in Boise, Idaho, brings together the aerial firefighting and utility sectors of vertical aviation with other operators, vendors, and government representatives from the FAA, the US Forest Service, and the US Department of Interior (DOI). It's a unique opportunity for networking, education, and product exploration.

More than 360 attended the 2023 conference, including Duke Puharich, safety director at Siller Helicopters, a longtime VAI member and AWSC attendee. He explains the event's importance to this industry sector.

"The Aerial Work Safety Conference is the ideal place to network and learn if you're in the firefighting, aerial work, and utility sectors. It is far more intimate, and those attending are the chief pilots, mechanics, records people, and safety officers.

"It is the only place where I can network with competitors. We meet as colleagues who work in the same places and face the same situations in the job. We talk late into the night, developing and strengthening relationships.

"The access to regulators and government officials is equally valuable. I can have face-to-face conversations with the FAA, Forest Service, and DOI. When you've met in person, it's not as awkward to call and ask for help. They know you and are more likely to help you get your issue or questions resolved."

“I have been coming to this conference for years, and it really is the best place to make those connections.”

— Duke Puharich



A presentation by Sarah MacLeod, aviation attorney and managing partner at Obadal, Filler, MacLeod and Klein, PLC, gave AWSC attendees a better understanding of compliance issues related to aviation maintenance regulations. (HAI/Jaasmin Foote)



VAI initiated a multichannel campaign to raise awareness of VAI among students and young professionals, culminating in sponsorship of the YoPro reception at NBAA-BACE. (HAI/Jaasmin Foote and Shawwna Kerns)

CELEBRATING **75** YEARS
OF SERVICE

VAI's scholarship program often makes the difference between a student starting and completing requirements to become a qualified, skilled pilot or maintenance technician.

THAT WAS THEN

April 25, 1983 – VAI (then HAI) established its first scholarship: for airframe and power plant (A&P) students.

THIS IS NOW

VAI awards up to 12 scholarships annually. Candidates must be VAI members. Students joining VAI for the first time get a second year of student membership for free.

VAI OUT AND ABOUT



A1: VAI's Chuck Street (right) visits English Air Service owner and president Mark English and sales manager Taylor English at the company's headquarters. **A2:** In April, 2022-23 chair Jeffery Smith (third from left) visited VAI member Leonardo Helicopters US at its headquarters in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. **A3:** Wings Air Helicopters staff meet with VAI's Josh Rousseau (center), to discuss challenges for aviation operations in the New York area. **A4:** Hawaii air tour operator members meet with VAI staff and Board members to discuss issues affecting their sector. **A5:** VAI staff celebrated with VAI members Joby Aviation and Volocopter during the first-ever flight demonstrations of electric vertical takeoff and landing aircraft in New York City.



B1



B2



B4



B3



B5

B1: VAI's tent at EAA AirVenture, Oshkosh, Wisconsin, with a 480B turbine on loan from Enstrom Helicopters, got plenty of visitors. **B2:** The Aerial Work Safety Conference in Boise, Idaho, is where the aerial work community gathers to network, meet with regulators, and learn the latest. **B3:** HAI HELI-EXPO 2023 attracted more than 12,400 industry professionals from 97 countries. **B4:** The team at the Paris Air Show connected with several dozen current and prospective member companies. **B5:** Diamond sponsor VAI celebrated 75 years of service at the 75th Wright Memorial Dinner, a must-attend event for the aviation and space community.

Contact Your Conventions Team

Charlotte Zilke, senior director, membership and conventions

Tanya Kirchner, director, conventions

Emily Monahan, manager, exhibits and experience

Erin Sweeney, exhibits specialist

Alyssa Miller, conventions coordinator

Events@verticalavi.org

VAI STRATEGIC INITIATIVES 2023-25

Year 1 progress on VAI's initiatives to position the vertical aviation industry for growth.

1: Unify the industry around a new vision of vertical aviation and continually promote community compatibility.

- Implemented the rebranding of VAI to encompass past and future visions of vertical aviation and drive innovation.
- Celebrated 75 years of a storied legacy.
- Increased membership through a fresh membership campaign highlighting the unique aspects of vertical aviation.

2: Engage all stakeholders in the global value chain to help create a favorable environment that helps the entire industry thrive and prosper.

- Launched VAI's US regional representative program to help members address industry issues.
- Added a Student membership category and increased outreach to young professionals with 24 joining in 2023.
- Provided industry input to the FAA related to the safe integration of beyond visual line of sight operations for small uncrewed aircraft systems.

3: Elevate safety culture throughout the value chain by providing leading-edge training and certification programs to continually sharpen flight and technical skills throughout the industry.

- Updated the legacy Accreditation Program of Safety, making it easier to implement. Program to launch at HAI HELI-EXPO 2024.
- Added 2023 Rotor Safety Challenge courses on the VAI Online Academy for members-only access.

4: Develop business resources that help companies elevate operational performance by providing resources to streamline paperwork and business operations for small- and medium-size companies.

- Operationalized 3 new benefit programs developed especially for small-business members.
- Created the VAI Small Business Initiatives Industry Advisory Council to identify the key needs of small-business operators and help VAI develop benefits addressing those needs.

5: Develop a pathway that helps attract and maintain the best workforce in the world.

- Continued outreach by the Workforce Development Working Group to maintenance technician schools on increasing workforce development mentorship, internship, and apprenticeship pathways.
- Expanded the Rotor Pathway Program to North Dakota.

Contact Your VAI Executive Leadership Team

James A. Viola, president and CEO

Michael Hertzendorf, chief operating officer

Cade Clark, chief government affairs officer

Sarah Arnold, director, corporate affairs and corporate secretary

President@verticalavi.org

ABOUT VAI

VAI Members

Operator Members *Categories under review
(membership benefits extend to all employees)

- **Helicopter Operators.** Individuals or companies who own/operate helicopters as a business tool, for personal use, or in public service for a local, state, or federal agency or entity.
- **Uncrewed Aircraft Systems Operators.** Individuals or companies that operate at least one uncrewed aircraft system and do not also operate helicopters.

Manufacturer/Supplier Members

(membership benefits extend to all employees)

- **Organizations** that provide products, supplies, and services to the vertical aviation industry or lease helicopters rather than operate them.

Individual Members

- **Pilots and Mechanics/Engineers.** Individual licensed pilots or mechanics/engineers in the vertical aviation industry.
- **Industry Professionals.** Individuals who believe in VAI's mission and wish to contribute to the industry but don't fit the requirements of another membership category.

VAI Membership Makeup



Total: 16,531 Industry Professionals

CELEBRATING 75 YEARS OF SERVICE

VAI has had four name changes through its 75-year history. Each time, the new name reflected the growth of the organization, the industry, or both. The Board of Directors chose VAI as a reflection of the growing diversity of vertical lift aircraft entering the airspace and recognition that its member base is increasingly more diverse as well.

Names through the Years

- **Dec. 13, 1948**
At its founding, the association was named the Helicopter Council.
- **Jan. 30, 1949**
The Helicopter Council becomes the California Helicopter Association (CHA).
- **May 26, 1951**
CHA becomes Helicopter Association of America (HAA).
- **January 1981**
To reflect its international growth, HAA becomes Helicopter Association International (HAI).
- **Feb. 26, 2024**
The Board of Directors reveals the association's new name at HAI HELI-EXPO 2024: Vertical Aviation International (VAI).

Vertical Aviation Industry Events, March 2024 – March 2025

2024

Mar. 19–22	AEA Conference	<i>Dallas, Texas, USA</i>
Mar. 21–23	WAI International Women in Aviation Conference	<i>Orlando, Florida, USA</i>
Apr. 9–14	Sun 'n Fun Aerospace Expo	<i>Lakeland, Florida, USA</i>
Apr. 22–25	Xponential 2024	<i>San Diego, California, USA</i>
Apr. 25–26	HeliOffshore Conference	<i>Vienna, Austria</i>
Apr. 30–May 1	Business Aviation Safety Summit	<i>Austin, Texas, USA</i>
May 3–6	Aviation Insurance Association Conference	<i>New Orleans, Louisiana, USA</i>
May 4–5	Great Alaska Aviation Gathering	<i>Palmer, Alaska, USA</i>
Jun. 19–20	Flight Safety Foundation Safety Forum	<i>Brussels, Belgium</i>
Jul. 12–13	Rotors 'n Ribs Fly-in (KGSF)	<i>Goshen, Indiana, USA</i>
Jul. 22–28	EAA AirVenture Oshkosh	<i>Oshkosh, Wisconsin, USA</i>
Jul. 22–28	Farnborough International Airshow	<i>Farnborough, Hampshire, England, UK</i>
Jul. 29–Aug. 3	APSCON / APSCON UNMANNED	<i>Houston, Texas, USA</i>
Aug. 6–8	Latin American Business Aviation Conference and Exhibition (LABACE)	<i>São Paulo, Brazil</i>
Sep. 7–11	NASAO Annual Convention and Tradeshow	<i>Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA</i>
Sep. 9–12	ICAO – First AAM Symposium	<i>Montreal, Québec, Canada</i>
Sep. 21	WAI Girls in Aviation Day	<i>Worldwide Online and Virtual Events</i>
Sep. 23–25	FAA-VAST Vertical Flight Safety Conference	<i>Virtual</i>
Oct. 22–24	NBAA-Business Aviation Conference and Exposition (NBAA-BACE)	<i>Las Vegas, Nevada, USA</i>
Nov. 4–6	AAMS Air Medical Transport Conference	<i>Salt Lake City, Utah, USA</i>
Nov. 4–7	EUROPEAN ROTORS	<i>Amsterdam, The Netherlands</i>
Nov. 18–21	NAAA Ag Aviation Expo	<i>Fort Worth, Texas, USA</i>
Nov. 19–21	VAI Aerial Work Safety Conference	<i>Boise, Idaho, USA</i>
Dec. 3–5	ICAAMS-2 (International Conference on Advanced Air Mobility Systems)	<i>Singapore</i>

2025

Mar. 10–13	VERTICON 2025	<i>Dallas, Texas, USA</i>
Mar. 18–21	AEA Conference	<i>Phoenix, Arizona, USA</i>
Mar. 27–29	WAI International Women in Aviation Conference	<i>Denver, Colorado, USA</i>