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**Five-Alpha President Rex Alexander Named Recipient of
HAI's Salute to Excellence Safety Award**

Alexandria, Virginia (Jan. 11, 2024) – Helicopter Association International (HAI) is pleased to announce that Five-Alpha Founder and President Rex Alexander is the recipient of the 2024 Salute to Excellence Safety Award. The award, sponsored by BLR Aerospace, recognizes outstanding contributions in the promotion of safety and safety awareness throughout the international vertical aviation community. It will be presented Feb. 26, 2024 at HAI HELI-EXPO 2024 in Anaheim, California.

A veteran rotorcraft professional, Alexander has made significant strides increasing safety in the vertical aviation industry through patience, diplomacy, and perseverance.

Alexander began flying in 1985 as a helicopter pilot in the US Army. He later served in the Indiana Army National Guard as a pilot, instructor pilot, and standardization instructor pilot. After serving in the military, Alexander flew helicopters for the offshore oil-and-gas industry before becoming a helicopter air ambulance pilot with Omniflight Helicopters.

Over the next two decades as an air ambulance pilot, Alexander became a force for safety. He joined the Indiana Association of Air Medical Services and the National EMS Pilots Association (NEMSPA). He served as a board member and president of both organizations, advocating for increased safety in the helicopter air ambulance industry.

“I lost a lot of good friends in military and EMS accidents,” Alexander says. “When you look at the accidents, most were completely preventable. One of the biggest things that pushes me is that pilots are held to a higher standard than anyone else when looking at an accident. After an accident occurs, it’s way too easy to blame pilot error. It requires effort and specialized training to identify and classify the causes of and contributing factors in an accident. I’m driven to identify these causes and contributing factors, educate the industry on why they are threats, and work to eliminate them.”

While serving in the air ambulance industry, Alexander began to develop and design heliports. Assisting hospitals, he learned how to identify safety issues regarding heliport standards, building codes, fire codes, and pilot education. With this knowledge, he began to advocate for increased safety across the industry. In 2006, he worked with colleagues at NEMSPA to develop the HEMS Weather Tool. The following year, Alexander became cochair of the US Helicopter Safety Team’s (USHST’s) new Infrastructure Working Group (IWG).

In 2013, with the HEMS Weather Tool still in experimental status, Alexander collaborated with the National Center for Atmospheric Research to hold a joint industry–government summit that led to full funding for the

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HEMS Weather Tool and the tool's establishment under the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Aviation Weather Center.

Since then, Alexander and members of the USHST IWG have hosted eight highly successful summits dedicated to advancing helicopter safety and improving low altitude–aviation infrastructure.

Heliport and vertiport safety remain a key passion for Alexander. Today, he is an infrastructure advisor to the Vertical Flight Society; a member of NASA's Advanced Air Mobility Ecosystem Working Groups; and chair of the National Fire Protection Association's Helicopter Facilities Technical Committee, which produced the association's 418 Standard for Heliports in 2021. Alexander is also an instructor for the US Department of Transportation's Transportation Safety Institute, teaching heliport evaluation, planning, and safety courses as well as an advanced rotorcraft accident investigation class.

“What drives Rex to action every day is knowing system safety is always shared and is always perishable,” writes Tom Judge, executive director of LifeFlight of Maine in his nomination letter for Alexander. “Every day, our people climb into helicopters, and soon new vehicles, and operate in a safer environment due to Rex's efforts they will never know.”

The Safety Award will be presented during HAI HELI-EXPO 2024. HAI HELI-EXPO[®], the world's largest helicopter trade show and exhibition, will be held at the Anaheim Convention Center in Anaheim, California, Feb. 26–29, with the exhibit hall open Feb. 27–29. For more information on HAI HELI-EXPO 2024, visit heliexpo.com.

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HAI is the professional trade association for the global helicopter industry and represents more than 1,100 companies and over 16,000 industry professionals in more than 65 countries. Each year, HAI members safely operate more than 3,700 helicopters and remotely piloted aircraft approximately 2.9 million hours. HAI is dedicated to the promotion of the helicopter as a safe, effective business tool that provides unique advantages to society and to the advancement of the international vertical aviation community.