



.....

2025

ANNUAL REPORT

VA VERTICAL
AVIATION
INTERNATIONAL

.....

FRANÇOIS LASSALE'S FIRST 90 DAYS

as VAI President & CEO



Safety

We do what's right when no one's looking.

Passion

We demonstrate our enthusiasm for vertical aviation by our dedication to mission and service excellence.

Integrity

We trust one another to do the right thing.

Respect

We show mutual respect and share knowledge to create a collaborative, open-minded environment for all stakeholders.

Innovation

We seek creative solutions, adopt new ideas, and continually improve how we support the industry.

Trust/Teamwork

We communicate accurately and act transparently to be viewed as a reliable source and collaborative partner.



VAI staff at the Alexandria, VA, headquarters

2025–26 Board



Rick Kenin	Chairman
Brian Jorgenson	Vice Chairman
David McColl	Treasurer
Mark A. Schlaefli	Assistant Treasurer
Nicole Battjes	Director, Large Commercial
Chris Baur	Director, Small Commercial
Jan Becker	Director, Small Commercial
Stephen Lee	Director, Government Service
Brandi Rector	Director, Medium Commercial
Mark Wegele	Director, Government Service
François Lassale	VAI President & CEO
Sarah Arnold	VAI Chief of Staff & Corporate Secretary
Michael Romanowski	Special Advisor – Emerging Technology
Sarah E. Mooney	Legal Advisor

The VAI Board met in June at VAI's Alexandria, VA, headquarters. During their weeklong visit, board members participated with staff in strategic planning sessions facilitated by the McChrystal Group and attended the VAI Board reception for members, staff, and guests at the Old Dominion Boat Club.

This past year marked a clear inflection point for VAI.

In a year of aviation regulatory milestones, VAI ensured the vertical flight industry was represented, delivering focused advocacy on the policy issues shaping daily operations and future growth. We did this while also advancing the VAI rebrand from vision to execution and keeping member service at the fore, raising expectations for speed, clarity, and follow-through.

Advocacy produced meaningful traction, with Part 108, the US effort to standardize and enable routine beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) drone operations; air traffic control (ATC) modernization; and airspace access (New York City region) as top priorities. VAI engaged the FAA and other stakeholders on the structure and intent of Part 108, with an emphasis on safety outcomes, workable compliance pathways, and integration with real-world operating models. We pressed for a process grounded in risk management, transparent assumptions, and clear guidance that members can apply without guesswork. We paired that engagement with member-facing explainers (VAI Debriefs) to translate policy into clear operational guidance.

The rebrand became real in the marketplace. VAI moved beyond a name change and delivered a unified identity across our events (VERTICON 2025, the Air Tour Safety Conference and the Aerial Work Safety Conference), publications (POWER UP magazine and VAI Daily), and member communications. We also tightened governance and internal processes to match the expectations of a modern international association.

Members should recognize the difference in clarity, consistency, and responsiveness. The rebrand also helped us tell a more complete story about the sector's scope, value, and momentum.

Safety remained the center of our work. We expanded practical safety content, elevated peer learning through webinars and articles, and reinforced partnerships that drive measurable risk reduction. We focused on actionable guidance that supports better decisions before flight, during maintenance, and across mission planning.

Your Board of Directors successfully completed the executive leadership transition with the hiring of VAI's new president and CEO in August and onboarding in October—after getting through international paperwork. In just a few months, he set a steady tempo: clear priorities, consistent external engagement, and a strong emphasis on operational relevance.

Under new leadership, VAI strengthened coordination across staff, committees, and global partners, with the goal of faster support for members and clearer alignment across the association. We also improved how we listen, with more structured feedback loops to ensure member concerns translate into action.

Thank you for your trust and engagement. Your input drives our agenda, focuses our advocacy, and keeps VAI accountable to operational reality. We look forward to building on this momentum in the year ahead.



Rick Kenin

2025–26 Chairman
VAI Board of Directors



François Lassale

President & CEO
VAI

VAI embraces the diversity of aircraft and professionals in vertical aviation worldwide.

Overview

Vertical Aviation International (VAI) is the trade association for the civil vertical aviation industry, representing 1,185 aviation businesses and more than 18,600 aviation professionals in more than 60 countries. VAI staff serve on 36 US and international regulatory and standards boards, ensuring that low-altitude and vertical flight operations are fully represented and meaningfully incorporated into policy decisions.

VAI is dedicated to fueling 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.

Member categories



Survey says...

VAI's annual membership survey for 2025 showed the following:

Top reason for joining/renewing, by member category

- Operators: Industry advocacy (**80%**)
- Manufacturers/Suppliers: Industry advocacy (**82%**)
- Individuals: To keep up-to-date on industry trends (**65%**)

Membership satisfaction rating

- Operators: **53%**
- Manufacturers/Suppliers: **82%**
- Individuals: **87%**

Would recommend VAI membership to industry peers

- Operators: **63%**
- Manufacturers/Suppliers: **91%**
- Individuals: **79%**

New Members VAI Welcomed in 2025!

Vertical Aircraft Operators

A2B Aero Limited	Avibuy Aircraft & Parts Limited	Contour Helicopters Ltd.	GD Helicopter Finance Ltd.	Leading Edge Aviation	Pasco County Mosquito Control District	Tripwire Aviation, LLC
ABS Aerospace Pvt. Ltd.	Baltimore County Police Dept.	CPI Security Systems	Hawkeye Helicopter LLC	Mauna Loa Helicopters	PK Helicopters, LLC	Valiair
Acasta Heliflight	Billings Flying Service, Inc.	Darana Aviation Services, LLC	Heli Dynamic PTY LTD	Mission Support and Test Services	Rebel Reds Aviation	Westchester County Police Dept.
Aero Adventures	Busy Bee Helicopter	Delaware State Police	High Mountain Helicopters, LLC	National Aeronautics and Space Administration Flight Operations	Semper Fly Helicopters	Wing Aviation LLC
Aerotech	Chatham County Mosquito Control	Doman Lumber Company	HI-LINE HELICOPTERS, INC.	Nevada Division of Forestry	Sierra Helicopters Ltd.	Zipline International
Alaska Land Exploration, LLC	City of Peoria Public Safety Aviation Unit	Egli Air Haul, Inc.	HoneyBee Helicopters	Pacific Gas & Electric	Skyline Helicopter LLC	
Allied Response, Inc.	Colorado Highland Helicopters	Elkhorn Aviation, Inc. DBA Baker Aircraft	Hosking Aviation	Panorama Aero	Swashplate Pty Ltd.	
Alpha Aviation LLC		Fly Bali	Hy-Ridge Helicopters, Ltd.		Treeline Helicopters Inc.	
Auriga Group			KAADL Aviation, LLC			

Manufacturers/Suppliers

3 MAD Air	Bank OZK	Fireside Partners, Inc.	Kal-Aviation USA	PAC Aviation International, Inc.	Experts LLC	USI Insurance Services
71lbs	BATT Suisse GmbH	Flytical	Kaman Air Vehicles	Pac West Helicopters, Inc.	Saft America Inc.	Vento Aviation
Academy Aviation Maintenance Training, LLC	Bongiovi Aviation, LLC	Fulcrum Labs	Keltia	Pak Rite Michigan	SCS CASES	Viking Life-Saving Equipment A/S
Acron Aviation	BPR Hub	GTG Aviation Consulting, Inc.	LIFT Airborne Technologies	PanoStat, LLC	Send Solutions, LLC	VyClimb Consulting, LLC
Aerius Group Pte Ltd.	Buckingham Manufacturing	Guest Associates, Inc.	Looking Glass Insurance Services, LLC	Phoenix Global Aviation Services, Inc.	Sensor Systems, LLC	WBPARTS Inc.
Aero Systems LLC	Class A Insurance Services, Inc.	Gyronimo, LLC	MAC Air - A Miller Aerospace Co.	PHP Engenharia	Serma Microtech	Wings Insurance
Aeroforce Logistics, LLC	Clayton International, Inc.	H-60 LLC	Maeda America	Piasecki Aircraft Corporation	SME Aviation	Wyoming Bucket LLC
Aerosync Engineering, Inc.	Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Systems	Helicopter Maintenance Solutions	MARVETO	PilotSafety.org	SMR Technologies	Zullia IP Technics Ltd.
Airport Courier LLC	CTG Solutions	Helicopter Spares, Inc.	Metro Atlanta Chamber	Piranha Training	Southern Rotorcraft	
Airport Planning Solutions	Designated FAA Agent	Heli-Hydraulics	Military Systems Group, Inc.	Polytronix, Inc.	Southwest GIS	
AirSync, Inc.	DLC	Heliport Safety Organization	MOHR Test and Measurement LLC	Power Aero Suites	Spokane Stainless Technologies, Inc.	Lawyer/Legal Services
AirTera	Electra.aero	H-Tech Airborne Solutions GmbH	Nebraska ARMES Aviation	Ratzlaff Aviation Contracting Services	SWI Manufactured Systems	Aviation Legal Group, P.A.
Alpaugh Aviation Service & Supply	Elmarx Aviation, Inc.	IHC, LLC	Nidec Aerospace	RECCO, Inc.	Titra Teknoloji A. S.	
Altruair	Energys	InTandem Promotions	NSS Aerospace, Inc.	Redleaf Aviation Inc.	Touchdown Helipads USA	High Schools
Attain, LLC	Engineering Systems, Inc.	Integrity Aircraft Title Holding, LLC	Onboard Systems Hoist & Winch	Rotor Blade Repair, Inc.	Trinity Aviation Dynamics LLC	Byng High School
Aviation Resources Group	Engstrom Family	Intermountain Business Insurance	Onyx Aeronautics	Safety Associates Flight	Troll Systems	
Bad Wolf Technologies	Eye In the Sky	Joy Aviation Supply	ORR Protection Systems, Inc.		Type One Incident Support, Inc.	

Pilots, Mechanics/Engineers, Industry Professionals

James Hull	Michael Blackwell	Kris Stone	Max Morris	Darryl Jelinek	Eric Joel Mamanke	Nigel Speedy
Tommy Farmer	Ryan Tauer	Robin Weisenburger	Timothy Latimer	Mike Mansur	Clinton Fereday	Jake Kendall
Donald Hughes	Hannah Santamaria	Tyler Rothlisberger	Sean McCarrens	Evan Curtiss	Timothy Bublitz	Gabe Whetsel
Belford Ward	Dennis Floyd	Eileen Weingram	Nathaniel McMahon	Ruben Campos	Ryan Sexauer	David Mayman
Devon Pinnegar	Zachery Geyer	Jason Gerstner	Kate Tian	Noel Shorts	Islam Ghazi Ali Qudah	Lenriss Aveline
Josh Coplan	Renate Buchner	David Orozco	Charles Precourt	Benjamin Bishop	Marty Blythman	Eliza DeBry
Andy Thomas	Andrew Ramsey	Renato Mertins	Aiden Salakaia	Adam Coe	Tom Luca Schneider	Terrin Garcia
Francisco Rosas	Jimmy Stone	Sarah Doran	Guy Comer	Timothy Boyle	Glen Major	Craig Dupont
Wolfgang Boernert	Jeffrey Spencer	Miklos Czerok	James Isaacs	John Navan	Jason Day	Thomas Pugh
Michele Maykowski	Richard Williams	Zachary Thoman	Michael Taekema	Will Hodgson	Florian Weber	Eric Harris
Stephan Konz	Emoken Iditere Musa	Thomas Lewis	Robert Rendzio	Paul Nowlin	Joey Stapleton	Lee Parent
Shannon Bowman	Allison McKay	Jack Ogle	Michael Heaney	Raul Morales Villarreal	Joel Smith	Eurico Lima
Jon K. Chin	Nicholas Chefalo	Marcus Aulfinger	Harveys Diaz	Michael Keaveny	Annemarie Blaesing	Felipe Koga Machado
Mike Hynes	Patrick Sarnacki	Richard Gregory	Edward Kiser	Andrea Puccinelli	Rebekah Hunter	Justin Powers
Terry Palmer	Munanie Mbatha	Brian Roberts	Matt Trofimchuck	Brian Brown	Donald Tolar	Jenn Townley
Mark Bennett	Peter Farmar	Michael Muehlendorf	Scott Davis	Phillip Woody	JD Worley	Hugues Plante
Glen Boatwright	Alex Atukwatse	Doug Wood	Matthew Nielsen	Joshua Harriman	Nathan Simms	William Raley
Marc Struckmeyer	Angie Griffin	Peter Wenham	Frederik Dauer	Donte Avery	Angelica Byrne	Rudder Williams
Chad Mertz	Alicia Martinez	Brent George	Patrick Deans	Tim Driskill	Steven Seier	Richard Carlton
Jack Pelton	Bennett Townley	Daniel Dolan	Daniel Fordice	Erik Engstrom	Tony Hahn	Landon Sielaff
Robert Mackenzie	Rafford Coleman	Mark Battle	Peter Pitzer	David Futch	Dean Crompton	Karrilee Nathan
Gregory Clark	Daniel Chaves	T Patrick Crawford	Larry Drinnen	Sean Wilson	Raquel Snow	Xiao Ren
Alfredo Casar Gonzalez	Mark Jansen, P.E.	Andrew Weingram	Artem Bukhalo	Cory McKibben	Gerard Subirats Gonfaus	Maja Aulfinger
Nickolas Rau	Sabrina Johnson	Jason Duggan	Gregory Scott	David Klein	Quinten Boyd	Meghan Beach
Luis Garcia	Rezaur Rahman	Bruce Nelson	George Nischan	Romulo Lima	Kathryn Inman	Kara Johnson
Gordon Jones	Thomas Humann	Jack Penick	Donald Fortenbery	Tony Michelle	Alberto Neumann	Robert Roderick
Brian Dara	Arie van de Pol	Cody Williams	Ben Cometti	Josemar De Souza	Daniel Bust	Lloyd Sherman
Timothy Fulk	Calvin Bois	Margaret Brill	Benjamin Lambert	Richard King	Casey Lucas	Jason Lott
Joseph Arsenault	Nathan Lee	Adam Graff	Michael Dickerson	Manuel Mai	Joseph Bailey	Peter Gillies
Steven Karbal	Dalton Glisson	Meaghan Magnin	Jeffery Clark	Daniel Gillis	Martha Morse	Daniel Johnson
Alton Jarman	Scott Summers	Delmar Washington	James Rhoades	Brandon Roberts	Robert Cunningham	John Roberts

Students

Charles Licon	Vincent Larrouy
Cathryn Myers	Alan Gerken
Scott Stanley	Lynda Prior
Kyra Vogt	Victor Staalbo
Chris Rayburn	Bethany Fulton
Levin Graf	Jeremy Weaver
Maximilian Ruehmer-Jungardt	Brendan Ramsden
Connor Woodward	Colin Alexander
Jiancarlo Gonzales	Daniel Kyser
Gabriel Armas	Matthias Psencik
Clayton McCall	Wesley Kroll
Luke Garrant	Ollie St martin
Richard Mitchell	Kristian Carlos
Brian Yost	Kaleb Miller
Dondi Briones	Brycen Carlson
Nikolay Aleksiev	Andriy Wybaczynsky
Lara Holland	Andrew P
Soami Ellis	Rob Bowman
Tyler Oliver	Matthew Williams
Rose Zourdos	Heath Phillips

VAI advances industry priorities through its advocacy with government and regulatory agencies.

Highlights

-  **Part 108.** VAI submitted comments to the FAA identifying key concerns in the proposed rule to enable unmanned drone operations beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) and offering solutions to ensure safe integration with existing manned aircraft below 400 agl (see story, next page).
-  **Helicopter routes.** VAI engaged with the FAA, Congress, and the NTSB about abrupt helicopter route changes or closures as part of the FAA's national review after the Jan. 29 midair collision near Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (KDCA) between a jet and a US Army helicopter. After concerns were raised, the FAA postponed or suspended the closures and convened working groups with operators.
-  **Air Traffic Control (ATC) modernization.** ATC modernization was a key topic at the annual General Aviation (GA) Summit, where the CEOs of the GA associations discussed top legislative and policy priorities.
-  **New Jersey legislation.** VAI led efforts opposing Senate bill S.4639, a bill to tax nonessential helicopter flights from state-licensed facilities, keeping it in committee and avoiding economic and aviation impacts.
-  **UPAC safety harnesses.** The FAA published a new policy removing gaps between its rules and major standards organization standards related to safety harnesses used by utility patrol and construction (UPAC) operators. This is a great success for VAI UPAC members and reflects over two years of collaboration between VAI's UPAC IAC, VAI staff, and the FAA.

Key Metrics

Part 108 was one of the biggest regulatory milestones of the decade for the industry, and VAI continues to advocate for safe skies for all aircraft.

- **119 (4%)** of the 3,097 submissions to the FAA on Part 108 during the 60-day public comment period were from VAI members endorsing or resubmitting VAI's comments as their own
- **30+ advocacy touchpoints** since VAI filed Part 108 comments, including briefings with congressional offices and state and local government officials

1,500+ operators were targeted in a grassroots campaign with other aviation associations to stop a New Jersey bill taxing nonessential helicopter flying out of state-licensed facilities

As **1 of 56 US aviation organizations** in the Modern Skies Coalition, VAI signed a letter supporting [ATC modernization](#)

Contact Your VAI Legislative Team

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Advocacy@verticalavi.org

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Contact Your VAI Regulatory Team

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Amber Harrison, director, regulatory affairs

Zac Noble, director, flight operations & maintenance

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In one of the decade's biggest regulatory milestones, the FAA announced plans to revise the rules for unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) operating beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS). In response to the Part 108 notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM), which shapes right-of-way and detect-and-avoid frameworks for vertical aircraft in low-altitude airspace, VAI advocated for safer operations for both manned and unmanned aircraft.

“It’s important to have a committed trade group that advocates for a balanced approach to emerging technologies and the associated regulations. Safety must be the central focus.”

— David Smith, CEO,
Robinson Helicopter Company

“Low-altitude airspace is busy. Helicopters operate there every day, often below 400 feet AGL, in high-consequence environments. VAI’s role is to ensure integration happens safely, deliberately, and sustainably,” says Amber Harrison, VAI’s director of regulatory affairs, an attorney specializing in aviation regulatory law and a helicopter pilot with nearly 1,500 flight hours. “As long as we get the regulatory

framework right, it means a big unlock for drones for a variety of use cases.”

Harrison led VAI’s response to the NPRM in coordination with VAI’s UAS Industry Advisory Council (IAC). The group advances safe drone operations in the US National Air Space, according to Fred Jottras, UAS IAC member and head of Advanced Programs, Strategy & Transformation, for Airbus Helicopters.

“With VAI’s help, IAC members have an opportunity to be heard and influence the [rulemaking] process,” says Jottras.

Many aircraft operators and even OEMs used VAI’s comments as their submission to the FAA. Robinson Helicopter Company followed that approach.

“We reviewed comments from various trade groups and individual operators that didn’t balance the needs of both parts of our business—manned and unmanned aircraft. VAI offered an optimistic path toward airspace integration while still highlighting key concerns,” says David Smith, CEO of Robinson Helicopter Company.

▶ Watch: Making BVLOS Work



Pilot Brad Isaacs and an unidentified lineman work from a Hughes 369D in New Castle, Delaware, on Dec. 3, 2020. The helicopter operator, HLH Aviation, assisted electrical utility contractor AUI Power by transporting field-crew members and delivering materials and tools during a construction and repair project. Courtesy Nick LaBrant

Safety is the currency of our credibility. It is a core value. Safety is paramount.

Highlights

- Gateway Program.** After helicopter operators reported nighttime visibility concerns along the Hudson River tunnel construction site, VAI worked with the FAA and contractors to improve operator safety with 24-hour lighting systems.
- National Pause for GA Safety.** VAI encouraged all pilots to participate in the Pause for GA Safety as part of our commitment to safety.
- USHST Peer Pilot Program.** The US Helicopter Safety Team (USHST) announced its Peer Pilot Program at VERTICON 2025 at the Safety Town Hall (see story, next page).
- Air Tour Safety Conference.** VAI's second annual safety conference for the air tour sector, held in Las Vegas, Nevada, brought 101 operators with 28 sessions, including an operators panel on [Day 2](#).

Key Metrics

VERTICON

- **120 attendees** at the Safety Management System Workshop got valuable operator implementation tips from VAI's Safety IAC members
- **80 attendees** came to the Safety Town Hall on pilot mental health led by the US Helicopter Safety Team

Safety Management Systems (SMS)

SMS becomes mandatory for Part 135 charter operators and certain Part 91 air tour operators on May 28, 2027.

- **\$32,000 savings** through VAI members-only SMS and ASAP discounts
- **23 operators** active in VAI's SMS programs

59 downloads of complimentary recommended practices focused on mitigating operational risk

6 Spotlight on Safety (SOS) videos with poster and article dropped in 2025



Contact Your VAI Safety Team
Chris Hill, sr. director, safety
Safety@verticalavi.org

Helicopter pilots regularly face burnout from operational pressures, fatigue, and exposure to traumatic scenes as well as stress due to personal matters. To help them navigate the turbulence, the US Helicopter Safety Team (USHST) launched its [Peer Pilot Program](#) at VERTICON 2025. The first-of-its-kind program designed for vertical aviation professionals provides free, confidential, nonjudgmental peer counseling to pilots, mechanics/ engineers, and flight crews.

Because they are familiar with the stressors, peer counselors can often make a difference with just one conversation. Sean Gavin, a volunteer counselor and New York Air National Guard pilot with over 16 years of helicopter flying, says, “The most important thing a peer volunteer can do is listen.” Along with four combat deployments, Gavin has served on search-and-rescue and humanitarian relief missions, and worked as an emergency medical technician.

Early on, fear and cultural challenges posed roadblocks, according to Chris Baur,

USHST industry cochair, member of the VAI Board of Directors, and CEO of Hughes Aerospace. Baur envisioned the program, advocated for it, and, with Hughes Aerospace contributing significantly to it, supported its creation.

“In aviation, mental health has long been viewed through a regulatory lens rather than a human one,” says Baur. “Many professionals fear that asking for help could jeopardize their medical certificate, job, or reputation.”

With USHST’s Peer Pilot Program, confidentiality is paramount.

“Calls are not recorded, and they’re not reportable to the FAA, the USHST, or a pilot’s employer,” says Aedrian Bekker, cofounder of the Somerset, England-based Centre for Aviation Psychology (CAP), which administers the program.

For those wanting to contribute, Baur suggests volunteering as a peer counselor and talking openly about how mental fitness affects safety. Companies can donate, educate staff, and post information.



Providing a trusted network of peers who understand the unique pressures of aviation is an essential step toward strengthening safety across our entire industry.

— Alyce Shingler, COO, Hughes Aerospace

Through events and publications, VAI helps the industry build networks and stay informed.

Highlights

- Rebranding Award.** VAI received the 2025 Gold Circle Award in the Rebranding Campaign category from ASAE: The Center for Association Leadership.
- POWER UP.** In September, POWER UP magazine, VAI's award-winning quarterly publication, became a member benefit.
- Online Community.** VAI launched its Online Community to give members more outlets to connect and network year-round.
- VERTICON® (formerly HAI HELI-EXPO).** CNTV provided VERTICON TV, a dynamic recap of each day's events, at VERTICON 2025 in Dallas, Texas, as well as offering advertising options for exhibitors such as clips and advertorials for use at their booth and on social media.

Communications Key Metrics

In the annual member survey, members ranked VAI Daily and POWER UP magazine as the most important content they receive from VAI.

885 press releases from VAI members were posted in VAI Daily

41,387 readers in 115 countries subscribe to VAI Daily

Conventions Key Metrics

- VERTICON** | Dallas, Texas, USA
14,414 attendees • 686 exhibitors • 88 countries
- EUROPEAN ROTORS** | Cologne, Germany (produced by VAI)
5,478 attendees • 266 exhibitors • 70+ countries
- Air Tour Safety Conference** | Las Vegas, Nevada, USA
101 attendees • 5 exhibitors • 4 countries
- Aerial Work Safety Conference** | Boise, Idaho, USA
387 attendees • 40 exhibitors • 5 countries



Contact Your VAI Conventions & VERTICON Team

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 - Emily Monahan**, CEM, manager, exhibits & experience
 - Erin Sweeney**, exhibits specialist
 - Alyssa Vasquez**, conventions coordinator
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Contact Your VAI Communications Team

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 - Bailey Wood**, director, strategic comms & media contact
 - P.J. Barbour**, video & multimedia producer
 - Christine DeJoy**, sr. editor
 - Andrew Parker**, editor
- News@verticalavi.org**

“ VAI has helped me further my career, specifically with the collaboration and connection with other industry members and VAI members. I started at Aviation Specialties about four years ago, and the access to operators and manufacturers has really sped up my development within the industry.

— Dan Meyer, Aviation Specialties Unlimited

“ Interacting with other leaders in organizations, you get to see how people interact with their companies, how they lead their companies. That’s part of the networking piece. I’m interacting with leaders at other companies: chief pilots, director of operations, vice presidents, presidents, CEOs.

— Jeremy Van Vliet, A & P Helicopters and VAI UPAC Industry Advisory Council member



MEMBER BENEFITS

VAI’s exclusive programs and discounts will help you grow, connect, and power up your career or company in the vertical aviation industry.

Connection

- POWER UP magazine
- VAI Online Community
- Save on Attending VAI Events
- VAI Media Advertising Discounts*
- VAI Member Directory Listing*
- Save on Exhibiting at VAI Events*
- News Coverage in VAI Daily*

Advocacy

- Exclusive Analysis of Legislative & Regulatory Impacts

Safety

- Flight Data Monitoring with Hands-On Support from Brazos Systems
- SafetyScan Global Accident & Incident Research Tool
- Discount on BowTie Risk Assessment Software from AeroDirections
- Safety Awards for Pilots & Mechanics/Engineers
- Discount on Fatigue Meter by Pulsar Informatics*
- Cirro by AirSuite Operations & SMS Software*
- SMS Coaching & Assessment from WYVERN*
- Discounts on Safety Management System (SMS) Software from Leading Industry Providers*
- Maintenance SMS Software & Coaching with AEA*
- Aviation Safety Action Program (ASAP) Discount*
- Discount on Foresight MX from GPMS*
- Safety Awards for Operators*

***Company-Exclusive Benefit:** Member companies—and all employees of VAI member companies—have access to company-exclusive benefits AND all individual benefits.

Education

- Save on VERTICON Education
- VAI Scholarships
- King Schools Courses Discount (30%)
- Purdue Global Tuition Discount (up to 20%)
- VAI Online Academy
- Online Library of Safety Education Sessions

Support for Member Success

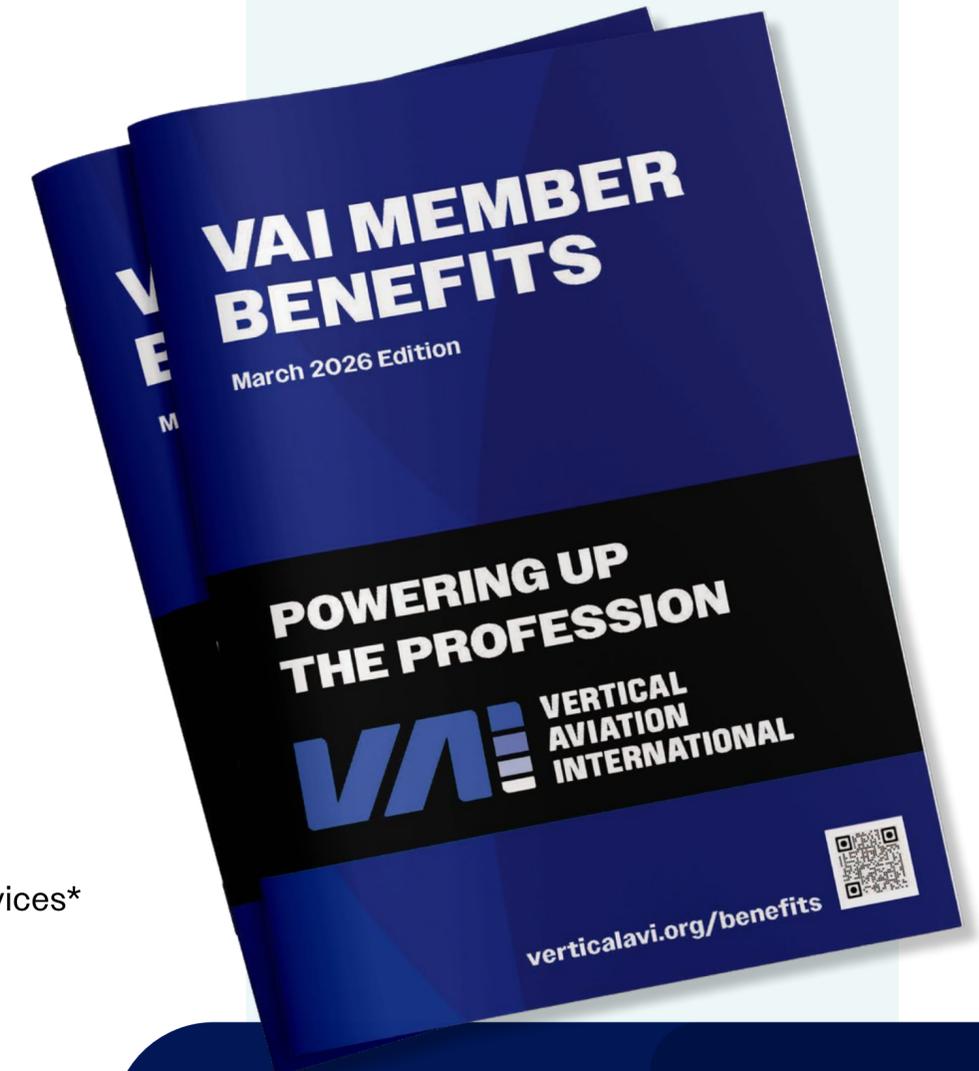
- Technical, Regulatory & Legislative Assistance
- Industry Advisory Council Participation
- VAI Debriefs
- Legal Resources Portal
- Discounts on JSfirm.com Aviation Job Board Services*

COMING IN 2026!

Baldwin SMS courses in VAI Online Academy

(with 10% member discount)

Check verticalavi.org/benefits to See Your Latest Member Benefits



Contact Your VAI Membership Team

Teresa Barton, director, membership

Linda Jackson, membership & data coordinator

Mashiyat Ahsan, research & data analyst

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VAI's wide range of training resources can improve your current skills, prepare you for the next job, and help launch your career.

Highlights

- Utah Rotor Pathway Program (URPP).** At its fourth annual fly-in, the URPP introduced 300+ students from six school districts to a wide range of helicopter missions. This first-in-nation model brings together educators, professionals, and government officials to prepare high school students for vertical aviation careers.
- World Helicopter Day.** VAI staff and board members attended the event in Norman, Oklahoma, cohosted by Semper Fly, a VAI member company. Staff engaged with state representatives about advancing workforce development policies in Oklahoma.
- 11th Girls in Aviation Day.** VAI hosted a Girls in Aviation Day event at the College Park (Maryland) Aviation Museum, supporting Women in Aviation International's global initiative to empower young women to shape the future of flight.

Key Metrics

VERTICON

- 30 member companies** hosted recruiting booths at the Industry Career Fair
- 80 member companies** participated in the Mil2Civ Transition Forum
- 100+ education courses** were offered, with many providing credit for renewal of inspection authorization (IA) certificates or FAA WINGS or AMT program credits

13 scholarships were awarded to VAI student members pursuing vertical aviation commercial pilot or mechanic/engineer certification

38 schools now participate in the Utah Rotor Pathway Program

196 views of VERTICON 2025 Foundations sessions on VAI Online Academy



Contact Your VAI Education Team

Greg Brown, director, education & training services

Ashten Brown, manager, operations & administrative liaison

Education@verticalavi.org



“ VAI’s resources have been a huge source of education for all of Aspen’s personnel. We’re able to take someone who is entry level and give them education and help rise them up, or they can be going back for recurrency, or they can just be going back to refresh their skills. So, for Aspen, that education piece is key.

— Evie Lynn, Aspen Helicopters



“ The opportunity to get exposure to education, when it comes to safety or best operating practices, as well as just meeting other operators and sharing that information and being a part of a good, positive culture, I think, is the greatest benefit to being a member.

— Chris Bailey, North American Helicopter

SUPPORT FOR MEMBER SUCCESS

Your membership gives you access to programs and experts to help you succeed.

Highlights

Industry Advisory Councils (IACs). VAI held the fall meeting of the Utility Patrol & Construction (UPAC) IAC of 70+ industry leaders in Nashville, Tennessee, hosted by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), a VAI member company.

VAI Board of Directors. VAI expanded its governance structure to reflect the growing diversity of the industry to ensure a balanced, inclusive approach to association leadership and decision-making.

VAI Debriefs. VAI's regulatory team provided a [debrief on executive orders reshaping drone policy](#) and low-altitude airspace in 2025.

VAI Rundown. Members receive VAI's e-newsletter recapping the latest activities and upcoming events every quarter. Its popularity is evidenced by a 51.61% open rate.

Key Metrics

VERTICON

- **14 IACs** held meetings, panels, or forums welcoming attendees to learn about the councils and the issues they're addressing
- **50+ attendees** came to the Small Business Initiatives IAC Panel session

VAI Members

- **450+ VAI members** volunteered on VAI IACs, a 22% increase over 2024 participation levels
- **56 new** small businesses joined VAI: 12 operators and 44 manufacturer and supplier members



Contact Your VAI Member Support Team

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Chris Hill, sr. director, safety

Amber Harrison, director, regulatory affairs

Zac Noble, director, flight operations & maintenance

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Teresa Barton, director, membership

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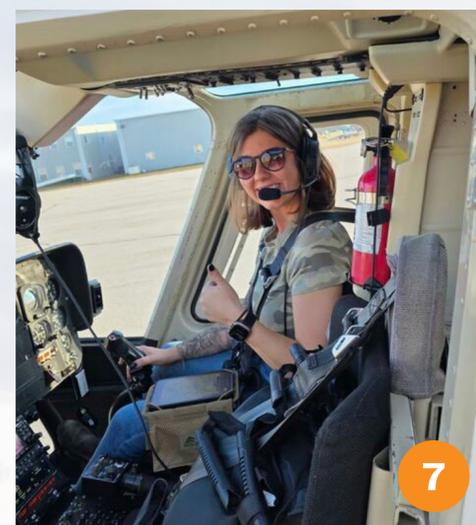
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1. At EAA AirVenture, VAI's Cade Clark (holding mic) and other executives from aviation associations discuss how their organizations can help with air traffic control (ATC) modernization efforts at a congressional town hall with (from left) Chairs Sam Graves (R-Mo.-06), House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, and Troy Nehls (R-Texas-22), House Aviation Subcommittee.

2. VAI's Katia Veraza (far right) participated on a panel with officials from three state aeronautics departments about strengthening the aviation workforce at the annual conference of the National Association of State Aviation Officials in Anchorage, AK.

3. On behalf of VAI, Gina Kvitkovich accepts the 2025 ASAE Gold Circle Award for Best Rebranding Campaign.

4. VAI held the fall meeting of the Utility Patrol & Construction Industry Advisory Council at VAI member Tennessee Valley Authority in Nashville, TN.

5. VAI's Chris Hill tries out equipment at the 55th International Paris Air Show, where VAI exhibited in the USA Pavilion.

6. Past board chair Jeff Smith (left) celebrates with VAI's Josh Rousseau, who was elected to the Eastern Region Helicopter Council board of directors at its annual meeting in Atlantic City, NJ.

7. VAI congratulates Brand Ambassador and former VAI scholarship winner Faith Ortega on getting her helicopter pilot rating.

8. At VAI member Idaho Helicopters, Theresa Marr and Cade Clark (with President Kory Hale) learned about the operator's air medical and firefighting services.

9. VAI's Greg Brown visits Brandi Rector and Michael Sanford of new VAI member Semper Fly Helicopters in Norman, OK.

10. While in Oklahoma, Greg also met with State Sen. Nikki Nice (D-Okla.-48) about the future of vertical flight in the state.

VAI's progress on its strategic initiatives to position the vertical aviation industry for growth.

This is a summary of activities VAI engaged in during 2025.

Unify the Industry

- Launched the '[What a Helicopter Can Do](#)' web page on the VAI website including video of operator missions for public awareness
- Created the Fly Neighborly/Environmental Industry Advisory Council to increase pilot participation in, and public awareness of, VAI's voluntary sound abatement program for vertical lift operators
- Expanded board governance structure to ensure a balanced, inclusive approach to association leadership and decision-making
- VERTICON 2025 in Dallas, Texas, brought together 14,400+ vertical aviation professionals from 88 countries to network, share knowledge, and experience new technologies
 - ▮ Multiple Fly Neighborly sessions educated attendees about community compatibility
 - ▮ Panels with US and European regulators included discussions of harmonization efforts

Engage the Global Value Chain

- Achieved US regional-level successes:
 - ▮ Through opposition and advocacy, stopped bills harmful to Hawaii's air tour operators related to insurance requirements and noise lawsuits
 - ▮ In response to VAI advocacy efforts, FAA suspended helicopter route closures at major airports in California, Nevada, and Maryland so that safety reviews and working groups with operators could occur
 - ▮ Served on panels discussing the future of vertical flight and the successful integration of advanced air mobility aircraft at two national conferences of state legislators and transportation officials
- Coordinated with other general aviation associations on:
 - ▮ Opposing New York City Council bill restricting nonessential helicopter operations at city heliports to all electric-powered helicopters
 - ▮ The FAA's ATC modernization efforts
 - ▮ Modern Skies Coalition
 - ▮ Removal of noise tax language in New York state's final appropriations bill
 - ▮ Opposing harmful taxes on noncommercial aircraft in Washington state
- Collaborated with international vertical aviation associations and regulatory authorities such as EASA, EHA, ACHAV, and others on harmonizing regulations and sharing best practices



Elevate Safety Culture

- Added safety management system (SMS), health and usage monitoring system (HUMS), and fatigue risk management resources, partners, and member discounts to help members elevate safety culture in their operations
- VERTICON’s safety programs included:
 - ▮ VAI Safety Zone daily demonstrations and activities, with VAI’s safety partners on-site to advise and consult
 - ▮ Pillar events, including the Safety Symposium, SMS Workshop, and Safety Town Hall
 - ▮ Foundations sessions with a safety track and Elevations professional education courses with a safety nexus

Develop Business Resources

- At VERTICON, the Small Business Initiatives IAC led a panel discussion and held a follow-on meetup
- During the year, the Small Business IAC provided clear insights to the needs of VAI small-business members, helping to shape the development of future member benefits and resources
- A [VAI Debrief](#) covering two executive orders (EOs) reshaping drone policy was added to the VAI website; it clarifies the implementation timeline and provides an analysis of the impact of the EOs on vertical aviation operators and the industry

Create a Workforce Pathway

- At VERTICON:
 - ▮ 30 member companies hosted recruiting booths at the Industry Career Fair
 - ▮ 80 companies participated in the Mil2Civ Workshop
 - ▮ 150 high school students came on a school trip to learn about the industry
- Gave Mil2Civ presentations at the Coast Guard Aviation Association conference and other events
- Began coordinating with VAI operators, education partners (both high schools and universities), and state officials to set up a Rotor Pathway Program in Louisiana
- Added a scholarship for aviation mechanics/engineers presented by Robinson Helicopter Co. for the 2026 program year



Contact Your VAI Executive Leadership Team

François Lassale, president & CEO

Cade Clark, executive VP

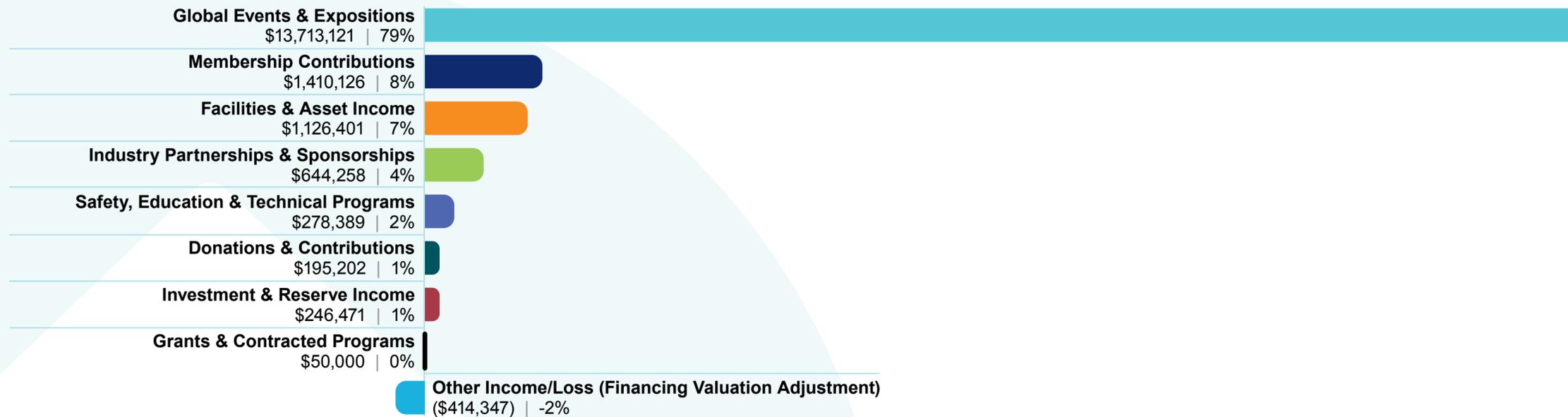
Sarah Arnold, chief of staff & corporate secretary

President@verticalavi.org

The annual report reflects VAI’s work during the 2025 calendar year. We report annual revenue and expenses on our fiscal year, which begins Jul. 1 and ends Jun. 30.

VAI is committed to strong governance, financial transparency, and disciplined reinvestment of member funds to advance safety, advocacy, education, and global collaboration across the vertical flight community. We are committed to enhancing our offerings by introducing programs that deliver value to our members while ensuring the protection of the organization’s assets.

FY 2025 Total Operating Revenue | US\$17,249,621



FY 2025 Total Expenses | US\$16,307,858



What This Means for Members

- VAI’s primary revenue engine remains global events, enabling reinvestment into safety, advocacy, and education
- Significant investment in advocacy and government affairs reflects increasing regulatory complexity worldwide
- Funding for safety, data, training, and education continues to be a core priority
- Operational and support costs are actively managed to ensure resources are focused on member value
- Financial oversight is supported by audited accounts and board-level governance.

In the [January 2026 FAR](#), President and CEO François Lassale outlines VAI's future flight plan under his leadership. One of VAI's top priorities: strengthening collaboration across the global vertical aviation community. Some areas of focus:

VAI International Program

VAI's [international program](#) serves as the leading voice of vertical flight before international regulators and functions daily to advance global safety, professionalism, and operational effectiveness through harmonised practical regulations, standards, and best practices. Its 17 member organisations include and represent national and regional associations across the Americas, Europe, Africa, and Asia-Pacific. The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) recognizes the program as a non-governmental organisation, and, as such, program members are able to attend and participate in ICAO panels and working groups.

VERTICON 2026

POWERED BY VAI
VERTICON[®]
March 9–12, 2026 | Atlanta
Exhibits Open March 10–12

The [world's largest vertical aviation conference and trade show](#) becomes the central meeting place where professionals, OEMs, and regulators from around the world gather to network, explore the future, share knowledge, and see, touch, and experience new and emerging technology.

VAI Southeast Asia Aviation Safety Conference

VAI
EVENTS
SOUTHEAST ASIA AVIATION
SAFETY CONFERENCE
2026 / 27–29 MAY / BALI

For this [inaugural safety event](#), VAI is partnering with operators throughout the Southeast Asia region to develop a program that reflects Southeast Asia's unique operating environments while including core safety topics like safety management systems and safety culture.

FIDAE 2026

**EUROPEAN ROTORS**
THE VTOL SHOW AND SAFETY CONFERENCE

Due to the efforts of the Asociación Chilena de Aviación Vertical (ACHAV), the Chilean Vertical Aviation Association, in collaboration with VAI, FIDAE, Latin America's International Air and Space Fair, will include three panels specifically focused on vertical aviation. VAI will participate in the panel on industry projections and the integration of emerging technologies, including advanced air mobility.

EUROPEAN ROTORS 2026

The sixth edition of this show, produced by VAI and owned and co-organised by the European Helicopter Association and EASA, will take place in Lyon, France. Europe's leading vertical aviation trade show and safety conference features a major exhibition, an educational programme, training courses, and networking opportunities — all designed to foster collaboration, safety, and innovation.

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.



VAI is unique among aviation organizations in that we represent both manned and unmanned operators who fly in low-altitude airspace every day.

