

Virginia Helicopter Association

2006 June

The first general membership meeting of the Virginia Helicopter Association (VHA) was called to order at approximately 2:15 pm on 11 June 2006 in the main hangar at Hampton Roads Charter Service at Hampton Roads Executive Airport.

Bob Reid began the proceedings by welcoming everyone and provided handouts that introduced the background and mission of the VHA. Bob went on to explain that his vision for the organization was to provide a forum for like-minded enthusiasts to exchange ideas, safety information, training tips, and other general information of interest to promote helicopter operations in Virginia. Bob explained that the VHA was still in its earliest stages and that he was working with other aviation associations, a permanent home for the VHA, a logo, the possibility of dues, and other administrative details. He encouraged all persons present to provide constructive suggestions in these areas.

Bob introduced Andy Gibbs, owner/operator of Hampton Roads Charter Service. Andy spoke on the subjects of 'flying neighborly' and Robinson Helicopter production. Andy said current Robinson production was approximately 20 helicopters per week and that the price gap between the R22 and R44 was closing. He felt that Robinson's strategic plan was to concentrate on R44 production (generally for safety and liability reasons) and that R22 production may decrease significantly and the R44 may become a primary trainer in the not-to-distant future. Andy also mentioned issues around off-airport landings and complaints. He went on to explain that on a monthly basis they receive helicopter noise or landing complaints. He conveyed the importance of getting permission from potential landing site owners and the importance of being an aviation goodwill ambassador by flying neighborly (noise abatement, rotor wash, etc) when operating outside the airport environment.

Bob then introduced Randy Burdette, Director of Virginia's Department of Aviation. Mr. Burdette spoke on the current state of affairs with Virginia Aviation and how the VHA fits into its overall scope. He also stressed the importance of being aviation goodwill ambassadors and said that many communities are rejecting new airports and other airports are in jeopardy because of zoning changes/growth expansion but also because of a negative view by many in the general population about aviation. Mr. Burdette also provided information on new nav aids being employed in Virginia and an overview of what the revenue from fuel and aircraft taxes provide in the commonwealth.

Mr. John Musser then spoke on military tactical flying and his broad experience flying both domestic and foreign aircraft. Although a high time pilot, he stressed the importance of all of us learning from the unique experiences that we have so that we all become better and safer pilots.

Bob adjourned the general meeting for a logo selection by key members at approximately 4:30 pm.