



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **USHST Holds Two September Safety Events**

*Alexandria, Va. (September 15, 2023)* – The US Helicopter Safety Team (USHST) completed two days of trainings and briefings this week, with a primary focus on the use of weather cameras as a safety tool in pre-flight planning. USHST held the two-day event at the Alexandria, Virginia headquarters for Helicopter Association International (HAI). Programs on both days were open to interested participants, either in-person or online.

The all-day “COPTER IFR/Weather Camera Program Summit” on Monday featured presentations from industry experts addressing pre-flight planning tools such as weather cameras, and addressed policies and methods of operating in Instrument Flight Rule (IFR) conditions.

The second day included a USHST Steering Committee, followed by the quarterly “All Hands” webinar. The all-hands webinar also focused on the use of weather cameras in flight planning, and also featured briefings from industry experts.

“Wow, what an incredible two days for the US Helicopter Safety Team at HAI Headquarters in Washington,” said USHST Industry Co-Chair, Chris Baur of Hughes Aerospace. “Our participants experienced a day of learning, identifying problems and shared experiences, as it relates to COPTER IFR. What stands out from previous events, were the number of Operators, Industry and FAA presenters and participants attending. I am humbled and grateful to all our presenters who made this summit a great success.”

With equal significance, the USHST's second day was devoted to the Steering Committee meeting, addressing both existing and new business for the USHST, as well as the All-Hands Meeting, which was led by Chris Young, of Pik West Insurance and Industry Lead for the USHST Outreach Team. Available for both in-person and online viewing, Chris masterfully lead the USHST through a series of briefings on contemporary topics of interest.

Several key takeaways from the COPTER IFR Summit:

- Weather Cameras – Clearly the weather cameras return an incredible investment in preventing accidents; the FAA reports their impacts in Alaska indicate an 80% reduction. Industry states they favor decision making that includes a camera source rather than relying solely on an AWOS. The coverage of weather cameras in CONUS is extremely low, and this must change. Congress must dedicate more resources towards full implementation, providing coverage in all 50 states.
- Use of GPS/WAAS-based instrument approaches at airports & heliports (aerodromes) for alternates. With the proliferation of space-based navigation, providing LPV/LP/RNP approaches, operators are not able to best utilize preferred aerodromes. The wide area augmentation system (WAAS) navigation-equipped operator may plan for GPS based IAP (e.g., GPS, Area Navigation (RNAV) (GPS), or RNAV Required Navigation Performance (RNP)) at both the destination and alternate airport. Currently the FAA only allows the use LNAV minimums for alternate planning purposes. . Unfortunately, this negatively impacts accessibility.
- Weather sources – a current monopoly on NWS approved weather sourcing does not meet the needs of the aviation industry. Distribution of weather is another area long overdue for improvement. Advisory weather as well as weather camera images must be accessible to pilots, dispatchers and other stakeholders when and where we operate, conduits such as ADS-B and wireless EFB platforms.
- The inclusion of all Instrument Flight Procedures into the FAA digital repositories, especially the 28 Day NASR, is essential to allow ease of accessibility into the IFR infrastructure.

. The exclusion and continued bureaucratic delays in adaptation of Special Instrument Departures and Airways creates unnecessary challenges.

USHST team members were pleased with the results of the two-day hybrid in-person and online event. “This summit was so successful; we are already planning USHST’s next hybrid residence/virtual Summit that will address another contemporary challenge to our community,” added Baur.

For more information, email the USHST at [safety@ushst.org](mailto:safety@ushst.org) or contact the organization’s communications specialists Dan Sweet from the Helicopter Association International at [dan.sweet@rotor.org](mailto:dan.sweet@rotor.org) or Gene Trainor from the FAA at [eugene.trainor@faa.gov](mailto:eugene.trainor@faa.gov).

### ***About the US Helicopter Safety Team***

*The USHST is a volunteer team of US government and industry stakeholders formed to improve the safety of civil helicopter operations in the National Airspace System. The USHST is a partner of the Vertical Aviation Safety Team (VAST). The USHST vision is a civil US registered helicopter community with zero fatal accidents.*