



# Press Release

Mike Hirschberg  
1-703-684-6777 x111  
[director@vtol.org](mailto:director@vtol.org)

*During July 13-July 21, contact:*  
Jim McKenna  
1-202-734-0179  
[jmckenna@vtol.org](mailto:jmckenna@vtol.org)

## **AeroVelo Team Wins AHS International's 33-Year-Old Igor I. Sikorsky Human Powered Helicopter Competition**

**ALEXANDRIA, Virginia – July 11, 2013** – AHS International, the world's premier professional vertical flight technical society, congratulates AeroVelo, Inc. for winning its Igor I. Sikorsky Human Powered Helicopter Competition for the first time since the Society established it 33 years ago.

A panel of vertical flight technical experts – the AHS International Human Powered Helicopter Competition Committee – thoroughly reviewed the design and flight testing of Toronto, Ontario-based AeroVelo's Atlas human powered helicopter, as well as data from its June 13, 2013 flight. Based on that review, the committee has verified that the Atlas flight met all of the requirements to win the competition and its US\$250,000 prize. AeroVelo's Dr. Todd Reichert piloted and pedaled the Atlas on that flight inside The Soccer Centre in Vaughan, Ontario.

The requirements to win the AHS Sikorsky prize were for an aircraft using only human power to fly for at least 60 seconds, reach an altitude of at least 3 meters (9.8 feet) and remain hovering over a 10 by 10 meter (32.8 by 32.8 foot) area. The full competition regulations, as well as past news updates, videos and other information, are available on the AHS International website, [www.vtol.org/hph](http://www.vtol.org/hph).

“The AHS Sikorsky Prize challenged the technical community to harness teamwork, technical skills and cutting edge technologies to meet requirements that were on the ragged edge of feasibility,” said AHS International Executive Director Mike Hirschberg. “It took AeroVelo's fresh ideas, daring engineering approach and relentless pursuit of innovation – coupled with more than three decades of advances in structures, composites, computer-aided design and aeromechanical theory – to succeed in achieving what many in vertical flight considered impossible. We congratulate the Atlas team on its incredible success.”

The American Helicopter Society (AHS), as the Society was then known, established the competition in 1980, and named it for one of its most important founding members, Igor I. Sikorsky. AHS originally offered a US\$10,000 prize, which was soon raised to US\$25,000. In 2009, Sikorsky Aircraft Corp. – which Igor I. Sikorsky founded in 1923 – increased the prize to US\$250,000 to better spur vertical flight innovation.

The competition was specifically designed to energize students and other innovators, by providing a hands-on, galvanizing experience for the next generations of vertical flight engineers, scientists and other specialists. The international competition has attracted teams from Canada (including schools in Montreal and Vancouver), Japan, the U.S., and around the world.

“The scientific breakthroughs, engineering innovations and inspiring accomplishments that have been engendered by the AHS Sikorsky Prize are a testament to the ability of the human spirit to tackle seemingly impossible challenges,” said Hirschberg.

The Atlas is larger than any operational helicopter ever constructed, based on its overall width of 58 meters (190 feet), though it weighs only 52 kilograms (115 pounds). It has four 20.4 meter (67 foot) diameter rotors that are powered by the pilot pedaling a Cervelo carbon-fiber bicycle. The Atlas project was begun in January 2012 and made its first flight in August 2012.

AeroVelo is one of three teams recently flying as part of the AHS competition. The others are the University of Maryland in College Park, Maryland with its Gamera II helicopter and California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, California with its Upturn II aircraft.

AHS International is also pleased to announce that AeroVelo’s win is not the end, but the beginning. The AHS Igor I. Sikorsky Human Powered Helicopter Competition will soon be followed by another grand challenge, the details of which are currently being refined.

### **About AHS International**

AHS International, based in Alexandria, Virginia, is the world's premier professional vertical flight technical society. The Society provides global leadership for scientific, technical, educational and legislative initiatives that advance the state of the art of vertical flight. On February 25, 2013, the Society marked 70 years of bringing together industry, academia and governments to tackle the toughest challenges in vertical flight. The Society was initiated by Sikorsky Aircraft employees, including Igor I. Sikorsky, just weeks after his company received the first American production helicopter contract.

AHS International has more than 6,000 members in 37 countries, including the world’s leading vertical flight manufacturers, suppliers and education and research institutions. Among the Society’s members are engineers, scientists, corporate executives, civilian and military program managers, pilots, safety specialists, students and faculty, and leaders in research, development, manufacturing, procurement and maintenance.

Follow us on Twitter, Facebook and other social media. See [www.vtol.org/connect](http://www.vtol.org/connect).

###