



Press Release

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VFS Congratulates New Helicopter Association International President & CEO
James Viola named incoming leader of HAI

Fairfax, Virginia, USA — The Vertical Flight Society congratulates longtime VFS member [James A. Viola on his selection](#) as the incoming President and CEO of the Helicopter Association International. Viola takes over HAI on Jan. 16, 2020, replacing [Matthew S. Zuccaro](#), who announced his retirement this past June.

“Jim has been an active VFS member since in 2007. It’s been a pleasure to work with him over the past several years,” said VFS Executive Director Mike Hirschberg. Viola was an [opening keynote speaker](#) at the VFS 75th Annual Forum & Technology Display in May 2019 and was featured in a 2017 “[Leadership Profile](#)” in the Society’s *Vertiflite* magazine.

The Vertical Flight Society was [founded in 1943](#) as the American Helicopter Society by the helicopter pioneers in industry, academia and government, who believed that technological cooperation and collaboration was essential to advance vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) aircraft. [HAI was founded in 1948](#) in California as the Helicopter Council for the collective benefit of helicopter operators. The two organizations have worked closely together for the past seven decades to promote the advancement of vertical flight aircraft and their applications.

VFS is the world's largest professional society for individuals and companies working to advance VTOL technology. HAI is the world's largest trade association for the helicopter operational community.

“It has been great to work with HAI's outgoing leader, Matt Zuccaro, who has made tremendous contributions to the helicopter industry over the past several years, particularly on important issues like safety,” said Hirschberg. Zuccaro and Viola were the industry and government co-chairs, respectively, of the [International Helicopter Safety Foundation](#) (IHSF), which was launched with VFS support in 2005 as the International Helicopter Safety Team (IHST), with VFS as the secretariat. IHSF is a global initiative to eliminate civil helicopter and VTOL aircraft accidents.



Viola was most recently the director of General Aviation (GA) Safety Assurance for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). He retired from the US Army as a colonel in 2008 as the Division Chief of Army Aviation in the Pentagon with the majority of his flying as a special operations MH-6 Little Bird and MH-47 Chinook helicopter pilot.

“Jim will do a fantastic job in leading HAI,” said Hirschberg. “We are very excited to work with Jim and HAI to support the advancement of vertical flight technology and its applications.”

About VFS

The Vertical Flight Society was founded as the American Helicopter Society in 1943 by the pioneers of the helicopter industry, who believed that technological cooperation and collaboration was essential to advance vertical flight. VFS is the global non-profit society for engineers, scientists and others working on vertical flight technology. For more than 75 years, the Society has led technology, safety, advocacy, and other important initiatives, and has been the primary forum for interchange of information on vertical flight technology.

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The Vertical Flight Society

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