



Press Release

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Vertical Flight Society Electric VTOL Aircraft Directory Reaches 500 Concepts

VFS and its members continue to advance vertical flight

Fairfax, Virginia, USA, Aug. 9, 2021 — The Vertical Flight Society (VFS), the world’s leading non-profit organization working to advance vertical flight, announces today that the development of all-electric and hybrid-electric-powered vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft has continued to gain momentum.

The transformative potential of eVTOL aircraft for urban air mobility (UAM), cargo and other advanced air mobility (AAM) missions is driving investment in the aircraft technology and their infrastructure. “Electric VTOL aircraft promise to be safer, quieter, cheaper and cleaner than today’s fossil-fuel-burning aircraft,” said VFS Executive Director Mike Hirschberg. “The aircraft design freedom from mechanical drive systems through distributed electric propulsion (DEP) allows myriad new vertical flight aircraft concepts, and innovators around the world are exploring the possibilities that electric propulsion can provide.”

The Society’s Electric VTOL News™ website (www.evtol.news), the first and foremost eVTOL information website, catalogues all known eVTOL aircraft. The directory was begun in 2016, with only a dozen concepts catalogued. This comprehensive directory now includes 500 eVTOL aircraft concepts — a leap of 100 aircraft since January and 200 since last July — representing 288 different companies/developers. These 500 entries include everything from conceptual studies and defunct projects to aircraft that are currently being flown for certification testing. The directory includes 500 designs — “everything from the silly to the serious” — from major aircraft manufacturers, leading eVTOL companies, new startups, innovators and inventors, and everyone in between.

This growth in entries is indicative of the overall growth in the eVTOL sector. Between 2011 and 2020, some \$4.5B had been invested in exploring the transformative potential of these eVTOL aircraft, with 2019 and 2020 averaging about \$1B of investment each year. Early this year, another \$4B in investments were announced to four leading companies: Archer Aviation, Joby Aviation, Lilium and Vertical Aerospace. In addition, airlines and other operators have placed conditional “orders” for more than 2,000 eVTOL aircraft from these and other American and European eVTOL developers.

Partly as a result of this extraordinary growth in interest and developments in eVTOL by industry, academia and government agencies, VFS has now reached 6,500 individual members — an increase of 6% in the last quarter and 23% since 2018 — and 155 corporate members — an increase of 55% since 2018; these are modern day records for VFS.

“Since we held the world’s first meeting of the eVTOL development community in 2014, the Vertical Flight Society has been at the forefront of what we see as ‘The Electric VTOL Revolution,’” Hirschberg said. “During this time, several of our earliest eVTOL members have grown from a handful of employees to hundreds, while many new eVTOL companies have only recently entered the scene.” The establishment of this new aviation sector is creating thousands of new jobs each year, advancing research and technologies, and creating new supply chains.

In addition to supporting electric VTOL aircraft developments, VFS is holding its 5th Workshop on eVTOL Infrastructure for UAM (www.vtol.org/infrastructure) on Sept. 20-21, 2021. This fifth semi-annual virtual workshop will focus on infrastructure operations and safety as they relate to eVTOL aircraft capabilities and performance. The workshop sessions will include presentations from key players and experts from the industry.

VFS was founded as the American Helicopter Society in 1943 by the visionaries of the early helicopter industry, who believed that technological cooperation and collaboration were essential to support this new type of aircraft. Today, history is repeating itself with VFS playing a similar role helping to advance today’s revolutionary VTOL aircraft.

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The Vertical Flight Society

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