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**Vertical Flight Society Announces RFP for its
2024–2025 Student Drone Competition**

Students invited to annual Design-Build-Vertical Flight (DBVF) competition

Fairfax, Virginia, USA, Oct. 8, 2024 — The Vertical Flight Society (VFS) is excited to announce the Design-Build-Vertical Flight (DBVF) 2024-2025 Student Competition Request for Proposal (RFP) is now online at www.vtol.org/fly.

This 5th Annual DBVF competition is for a number of prizes totaling \$5,000. This competition challenges student teams to design, build and fly a remote-controlled / autonomous electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft, specifically tailored to address the demands of wildfire response.

The deadline to submit a Letter of Intent to Compete is Oct. 30, 2024. Those teams who meet all requirements to proceed will make their final presentations the week of March 17, 2025, followed by the teams competing in the fly-off during April 8–11, 2025. The fly-off event will be hosted at the SURVICE Engineering Applied Technology Operation (ATO) facility in Churchville, Maryland.

Wildfires present an increasingly significant threat to ecosystems, communities, and infrastructure worldwide. Drones, with their versatility and rapid deployment capabilities, have emerged as essential tools in combating these natural disasters. They can provide real-time surveillance, assess fire boundaries and even deliver payloads like fire retardants or rescue supplies in hard-to-reach areas. By offering aerial perspectives and precise operations, drones help to enhance the effectiveness of firefighting efforts while reducing risks to human responders on the ground. In this competition, students are tasked with developing an eVTOL aircraft designed for wildfire missions, focusing on speed, maneuverability, autonomous operation and precision in payload delivery, all critical factors in real-world wildfire management.

“This year's DBVF focuses on engineering to address real-world applications, and we are excited to celebrate the innovation that each team brings to the competition,” said Adithya Ramaswami, Chair of the DBVF Student Competition. “Students will have to think through many design considerations and technical decisions as they work to optimize their aircraft. The challenges faced will not only strengthen their skills as engineers and innovators, but also provide invaluable hands-on experiences that will serve them throughout their future careers. The friendships formed and lessons learned along the way will be just as important as the final designs they present.”

The annual competition is designed to develop practical skills and familiarization with eVTOL and advanced air mobility (AAM) technology at the university student level and prepare the next generation of engineers and leaders to push the limits of this exciting technology into the future. It

also seeks to encourage interest in uncrewed aircraft systems (UAS) technology, and small air vehicle design and fabrication.

Founded as the American Helicopter Society in 1943, the Vertical Flight Society is the global non-profit society for engineers, scientists and others working on vertical flight technology. For more than 80 years, the Society has led technical, safety, advocacy and other important initiatives, and has been the primary forum for interchange of information on vertical flight technology.

VFS is a thought leader in vertical flight, electric flight and hydrogen flight developments. Learn more about the Society's educational initiatives at www.vtol.org/education.

VFS is @VTOLsociety on social media: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Threads](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#), and also has @ElectricVTOL channels on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

The Vertical Flight Society

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