



HELICOPTER SAFETY NEWS

March 2016

Contact: Tony Molinaro

Phone: (847) 294-7427

U.S. Helicopter Safety Team Names Raj Helweg of Air Methods as Co-Chair

WASHINGTON DC – Raj Helweg, chief pilot of Air Methods, has been named the new industry co-chairman of the United States Helicopter Safety Team (www.ushst.org). The USHST was formed in 2013 as a regional partner within the International Helicopter Safety Team (www.IHST.org) to lead a government and industry cooperative effort to promote safety and work to reduce civil helicopter accidents and fatalities.

Helweg oversees the training and compliance of approximately 1,300 pilots in his role as chief pilot for Air Methods, which operates more than 300 air medical transport bases serving 48 states across the U.S. Prior to his position as chief pilot, Helweg served as a regional aviation director and regional aviation manager and flew Sikorsky S-76 and S-92 helicopters in the oil and gas industry.

“Raj Helweg will be a wonderful addition as a leader for the U.S. team,” said Jim Viola, USHST government co-chairman and manager of the FAA Flight Standards Service - General Aviation and Commercial Division. “His operational and safety expertise will help us to continue our success in reducing helicopter accidents and fatalities here in the United States.”

Viola added, “I would also like to thank Chris Eastlee, President of the Air Medical Operators Association (AMOA), for his two years of service as USHST industry co-chairman. With his direction and support, the team achieved excellent improvements in safety across the helicopter industry.”

Since 2013, the U.S. Helicopter Safety Team has focused on the U.S. commercial helicopter community and fatal accidents. Through 2015, total accidents have decreased for the second year in a row and the helicopter accident rate has been cut by 54 percent compared to 10 years ago. In addition, fatal accidents are down 41 percent and the fatal accident rate is down 61 percent compared to a decade ago.

Air Methods Corporation (www.airmethods.com) is the global leader in air medical transportation. The Air Medical Services Division is the largest provider of air medical transport services in the United States. The United Rotorcraft Division specializes in the design and manufacture of aeromedical and aerospace technology. The Tourism Division is comprised of Sundance Helicopters, Inc. and Blue Hawaiian Helicopters, which provide helicopter tours and charter flights in the Las Vegas/Grand Canyon region and Hawaii, respectively. Air Methods’ fleet of owned, leased or maintained aircraft features over 450 helicopters and fixed wing aircraft.