



**President's Report 2022**  
**Trevor Mitchell, President & CEO**

Good Afternoon. It has been my great pleasure to serve as your President & CEO for the preceding 11 months. It has been an interesting and active year in the Canadian Helicopter sector with many new and existing concerns on various fronts.

**Finances**

You will hear from our Treasurer in her Report, that HAC did not start the 2021 – 2022 fiscal year in strongest financial situation. Initial budget projections identified the Association was set to see a deficit of 192 thousand dollars for the 2021-2022 year. The inherited budget was reviewed and prudent decisions were made in consultation with the Board to reduce expenditures while still retaining or in some instances increasing the level of service to membership. Ultimately these steps resulted in a reduction of the forecast loss by half to a realized loss of 96 thousand dollars as presented in the DRAFT AUDITED Financial statements.

Moving forward we will continue to review our expenditures, internal procedures and leverage gains when and where they are available. This will be a continuous and concerted effort to ensure the internal workings of the association are dealt with and are in support of the Association's mandate.

For the 2022-2023 session HAC has increased its membership rates. This was not an easy decision to make, but after due consideration the decision was to have our first increase in three years. We ensured to keep that increase as low as possible, that rate being 3.5%. This modest increase will permit the Association to address its necessary expenditures and realize a very modest surplus given additional financial prudence.

**HAC's Convention**

We have returned to Calgary, our last time here in Cow Town was back in 2012. We have received the question many times "Why not Vancouver"? Simply it comes down to two very simple reasons, pricing, and pandemic. For this year's show the facility and support pricing in Vancouver were extremely high, this increase in rate was a direct result of pandemic pressures and would have seen an increase in exhibitor and attendee costs that were not acceptable. Consideration was given to the fact that all business, organizations and individuals at the time of planning were in various stages of recovery from the pandemic and all the effects it had, so costing was at the front of mind. Quite simply we needed to ensure we did not overextend on any fronts and ensure then conference could remain sustainable.

Provincial measures focused on re-opening as we all remember were varied to say the least, with B.C. being more restrictive than Alberta at the time of initiating planning activities for this event. As well the Calgary tourism association provided financial relief as did this fine venue, a financial incentive package was not available from the Vancouver entities. The ability to foresee that a Calgary event was viable given meeting restrictions and costing ultimately helped guide the decision-making process.

Moving forward, planning sessions for the 2023 event will start almost immediately at the end of this event and we will provide membership information updates as they become available.

## **Industry Challenges Now, and Moving Forward**

### **Shortage of Skilled Labour**

For many operators the challenges of finding new and experienced employees in all areas of our industry has continued to plague us as our biggest challenge.

HAC has been active on this issue. You will see many of the presenters at this year's conference either directly addressing attraction of new employees, maintaining the health and fatigue level of current employees or attracting foreign employees. We have been working with the Canadian Council for Aviation and Aerospace (CCAA), to help develop an Industry Led Training for the Aviation and Aerospace Sector (ILTP). This program is focused at Aircraft Maintenance Engineers and Aircraft Structures technicians to permit their training to happen while they are employed. The goal is to see some wage relief by the Federal government, students can train while working with flexible training times based on their schedule and the schedule of their employer. This program is not designed to replace brick and mortar schools but instead to be a supplement to these institutions and the number of new employees they are capable of launching into our industry. This program will also provide for Up-Skilling of current employees.

As well HAC has started to have face to face visits to Aircraft Maintenance schools as well as flight schools, helping establish relationship of potential employees into industry so we lose less future employees to the airlines. Further to this, we have developed a Student pricing for registration to the HAC 27<sup>th</sup> annual convention. This will put future employees face to face with potential future employers in a engaging environment. Further to this, we will be establishing a Student membership to the HAC organization. This will provide new AME's, Structure's Technicians, Avionics Technicians and Pilots exposure to our industry and provide access for all members to see contact information for each other regarding employment opportunities.

### **Other Regulatory Challenges in the Last Year**

#### **Flight & Duty Time**

FRMS will be coming into effect December 12, 2022. This message has been delivered numerous times by the Director General Transport Canada Civil Aviation. Given the regulators unwavering stance on this issues HAC has transitioned from lobbying activities to training activities. HAC has organized Operator Member training sessions that remain available on the HAC website in the Members Only section these are all free of charge.

The new system will provide for a Prescriptive and Performance based regulatory system to 703 operations. These systems will change the way business is schedule and completed, and should a Performance based system be implemented how the crew and operators tack flight and duty times.

We are aware the new systems will create challenges and HAC will continue to address these challenges with the industry stakeholders and the regulator to help ease this transition.

It should also be noted that a FRMS type system will ultimately form part of an operators SMS when that program eventually comes into force and is regulated.

#### **Transport Canada Exemptions**

We have seen a plethora of Exemptions come out in the last year. Some necessary, but many appear to facilitate the Regulators shortage of human resources or intact data management systems. It is important that HAC be provided adequate consultation periods and return adequate response to the consultation periods as it relates to proposed Exemptions. HAC sees this situation as a way to engage the Regulator

and provide input to remove some of the Exemptions that are not required and have that content implemented into Regulation or have them removed completely.

Another membership concern related to Exemptions is that some of these exemptions are not being applied equally between Transport Canada regions. It is currently somewhat common for an operator in one region be denied an Exemption that is in effect in another region under the same conditions. HAC is striving to help establish a consistent Exemption application process across all jurisdictions, so members can work across the country in this Federally regulated industry and have consistent application of this temporary process applied.

## **UAVs**

The Beyond-Line-of-Sight operation of UAVs or Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) continues to move forward, it will present challenges and opportunities for helicopter operators. The concerns that directly impact our industry are that the current and future regulations treat RPAS aircraft and crew differently in Canada. The current and proposed regulations do not address issues like FRMS for drone operators and they are set to “self-declare” that they are not fatigued. These emergent technology vehicles will share the same airspace as conventional aircraft yet be subject to many different regulations. Currently RPAS systems are not subject to ADS-B requirements and in discussion with the Regulator it appears that this has not been a consideration. The Association will continue to work with groups like CAAM to help ensure the advancement of the RPAS systems do not negatively impact helicopter operations in the future as they do today.

## **New Director General at Transport Canada**

Transport Canada Civil Aviation has recently named a new Director General. HAC had put in significant efforts to develop a strong working relationship with the previous DG. Given the changing of individuals at the TCCA top position, HAC will work hard to re-establish this relationship to be supportive for HAC members and the Canadian industry. It is understandable that the new DG will need to establish his own way of addressing key items that are important to HAC and its membership, but this new start will create and opportunity for HAC to help shape and direct policy and process moving forward.

## **Other Items of Interest**

I continue to sit as an active member on the Vertical Aviation Safety Team (VAST), please see the link on the HAC website to various helicopter related safety information. I remain on the Board for the Canadian Council for Aviation & Aerospace (CCAA) and on the NAV CANADA Advisory Committee that provides advice to the NAV CANADA Board of Directors on issues affecting the interests of the industry and the corporation. Ultimately, the time that I spend on these Boards is evaluated by the value that they return to our industry. Should you have specific items that HAC’s presence at these industry partner groups can assist with, please forward those issues to myself so we can bring them forward.

I want to take a moment to recognize and thank Barb, Darlene, Leanne and our volunteer student pilots from LR Helicopters and Mountain View Helicopters for their hard work in preparing and executing this year’s convention. I know they work tirelessly for you, and their efforts have not gone unnoticed.

Andrea Dashwood, our Treasurer will make reference to them individually, in her Treasurer’s Report, but I also wanted to say a personal thank-you to our Corporate Sponsors and our Convention Sponsors - and to all of our Member-Operators, Associates, and Individuals for their on-going support for HAC. This is your Association, so that support permits us to do work on your behalf.

Finally, if you have any thoughts or ideas for change, please approach me or one of your Board Members. Only with your input can we continue to evolve to serve you, better. Thank-you.