eVTOL INSIGHTS

Shaping the future of advanced air mobility

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BEHIND HORIZON AIRCRAFT:

Brandon Robinson on leadership, risk and resilience

Joby completes autonomous flight across the United States

UK CAA selects three hydrogen aviation projects

Mike Ross becomes interim CEO of Pivotal

SkyDrive and Verty explore South Korean services from 2028



EDITORIAL NOTE

Welcome to this edition of eVTOL Insights' Digital Magazine.

A question runs through this month's stories: what will it take to turn promising aircraft programmes into dependable, everyday services? The answers are becoming more practical, with flight testing increasingly examining how new technologies fit into existing aviation operations.

Joby's autonomous journey across the United States, completed by a converted Cessna Caravan, demonstrates the growing scope of its autonomy technology. Elroy Air's cargo flights in Louisiana and Electra's testing of helicopter-style procedures in Virginia offer further opportunities to learn how new aircraft can operate alongside conventional traffic. Each programme is generating experience that will matter well beyond an individual demonstration.

Progress also depends on what happens on the ground. Archer and BETA's proposed shared charging network in Texas highlights the importance of infrastructure that accommodates multiple operators. Meanwhile, LYNEports' planning platform and the UK CAA's latest Hydrogen Challenge projects address decisions around site suitability, energy supply and airport operations.

Heart Aerospace's ES-36 announcement and purchase agreement with JSX bring another dimension to the discussion: how aircraft design and airline requirements can shape the commercial case for regional electric aviation.

These developments give us plenty to examine, but demonstrations, agreements and development targets should not be confused with established services. Certification, operational readiness and commercial viability remain essential tests of the industry's ambitions.

People are equally central to that work. Leadership changes at Vertical Aerospace, Pivotal and CAAM come as organisations prepare for their next chapters. Our Women in AAM Special Report also celebrates the women contributing across engineering, operations and business leadership.

As you explore this edition, I hope these stories encourage discussion about where progress is strongest, what still needs attention and how the wider industry can work together to move forward.

Enjoy the read.

— Jason Pritchard, Executive Editor, eVTOL Insights

contents

Inside the latest issue of eVTOL Insights:

05	Joby completes autonomous flight across the United States
06	Archer and BETA plan shared charging network in Texas
07	CAAM searches for new leader ahead of 2027 transition
08	National AAM Forum turns attention to scaling operations
09	Elroy Air completes autonomous cargo flights in Louisiana
11	Mike Ross becomes interim CEO of Pivotal
12	Heart Aerospace unveils ES36 with JSX purchase agreement
13	Electra tests helicopter style airport procedures
14	CEO Feature: Horizon
21	Women in AAM Special Report celebrates industry leaders
22	Fabrice Brégier appointed chair of Vertical Aerospace
23	UK CAA selects three hydrogen aviation projects
24	LYNEports launches aviation infrastructure planning platform
25	Open Skies Network and Logan plan hydrogen infrastructure
26	Drone trial to support electricity network fault detection
27	SkyDrive and Verty explore South Korean services from 2028
28	Skyports secures nine AAM projects across Japan
29	ARIDGE plans UAE flying car testing sandbox
30	Kite Aero starts Australian production with Sykes





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Joby completes autonomous flight across the United States



Joby Aviation says a converted Cessna Caravan equipped with its autonomy technology has travelled 3,199 miles from California to North Carolina without control inputs from its onboard safety pilot.

The aircraft autonomously taxied, took off, cruised and landed during the eastbound journey. Teams in California and at Shaw Air Force Base in South Carolina supervised the flights remotely, with operations managed from up to 2,323 miles away.

Part of Joby's 2026 Electric Skies tour, the journey included operations at Phoenix Deer Valley Airport and demonstrations of rerouting around severe weather. Stops at Shaw and Alliance Airport in Texas explored military and freight applications.

The journey ended at Dare County Regional Airport, followed by a low pass near the First Flight Monument at Kitty Hawk. Flights also supported initiatives examining healthcare logistics and challenging operating environments.

Joby says the system, based on technology acquired from Xwing in 2024, has accumulated more than 400 flights and 800 automated flight hours. Potential applications include cargo delivery, medical transport, disaster response and defence logistics.

The demonstration encompassed both controlled and uncontrolled airspace, testing autonomy across different airport environments. Joby said the aircraft could alter its route around thunderstorms and severe weather even when it had no prior familiarity with an airport on the journey.

In North Carolina, the flights contributed to the Department of Transportation's eLIFT-NC initiative, which is investigating aviation-based healthcare logistics. Other flights supported Utah's uFLY coalition, examining high-altitude operations and integration in extreme environments for the FAA. These activities formed part of a broader programme of demonstrations and logistics trials, exploring how autonomous flight technology might be applied to missions beyond the coast-to-coast journey and its relevance to potential future operations.

Archer and BETA plan shared charging network in Texas



Archer Aviation and BETA Technologies plan to expand interoperable electric aircraft charging infrastructure in Texas as the state prepares for flights under the federal eVTOL Integration Pilot Program (eIPP).

The companies are working through America's Consortium for Electric Skyways (ACES), which they launched with Macquarie Capital. Together with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), the consortium intends to identify likely operating locations and establish where charging facilities will be needed.

Airports, fixed-base operators and other destinations are under consideration. The proposed network would serve aircraft from multiple manufacturers and operators, supporting shared access to charging infrastructure.

Selected for the eIPP in March 2026, TxDOT has outlined regional test flights connecting Dallas/Fort Worth, Austin, San Antonio and Houston, alongside links between metropolitan areas and rural communities.

Texas would provide an early opportunity to assess the infrastructure model alongside planned aircraft operations. ACES has a wider ambition to electrify up to 250 air taxi sites at major US airports and metropolitan locations over the next decade.

The consortium's planning work will therefore need to account for different aircraft types and operating requirements across the planned Texas network. Archer and BETA are among the companies expected to carry out all-electric flights in Texas in the coming months, giving the partners an opportunity to connect infrastructure planning with practical operating needs.

A shared approach would allow the same locations to accommodate multiple participants as services develop. Rather than selecting sites independently of proposed routes, ACES and TxDOT intend to assess where operators are likely to fly and where charging would support those journeys. The programme will test that approach across a state considering both connections between major population centres and services reaching smaller communities.

CAAM searches for new leader ahead of 2027 transition



Canadian Advanced Air Mobility (CAAM) has begun recruiting a new Executive Director as founder JR Hammond prepares to step down at the end of 2026.

Hammond established the organisation in 2018 with the National Research Council of Canada. His eight-year tenure concludes on December 31, although he will support the National Board through recruitment and help the incoming leader during the transition.

Applications opened on September 15 and close on October 1. Candidate reviews are planned for the fourth quarter, with a target start date of January 1, 2027.

CAAM is seeking a leader to guide the organisation as Canada's AAM sector moves towards commercial and operational objectives. It will also consider strategic merger opportunities to strengthen its role in the ecosystem.

Under Hammond, membership grew to more than 250 organisations across industry, government and academia. CAAM also helped host ICAO's inaugural Advanced Air Mobility Symposium in Montréal in 2024.

The organisation says member services, programmes, government engagement and international commitments will continue throughout the transition. Hammond intends to remain involved in developing commercial AAM operations in Canada.

The Montréal symposium attracted more than 1,700 participants from 87 countries, reflecting the international scope of the organisation's engagement. CAAM also maintained its activities through the COVID-19 pandemic as its membership expanded to include operators, manufacturers, airports and other stakeholders.

Hammond said the organisation's changing priorities made this an appropriate time for new leadership. The incoming Executive Director will need to address the regulatory, commercial and operational challenges that still stand between industry development and wider deployment. Recruitment will be overseen by CAAM's internal selection team and National Board, with Hammond assisting both the selection process and the subsequent leadership handover process.

National AAM Forum turns attention to scaling operations



The fifth National Advanced Air Mobility Industry Forum will take place on October 15 at the National Advanced Air Mobility Center of Excellence (NAAMCE) in Springfield, Ohio.

This year's event will examine how aircraft programmes can progress from demonstrations and flight testing to production and routine operations. Manufacturers, regulators, defence representatives, investors and infrastructure providers are expected to attend.

Electra CEO Marc Allen will deliver the keynote. The programme also includes a defence discussion with BETA Technologies, Electra and SMG Consulting, plus a panel addressing workforce, manufacturing, supply chains and infrastructure.

Workshops will explore the infrastructure needed beyond the prototype stage, the role of digital engineering and certification data, and community engagement and public acceptance. Participants will share their findings with the wider forum.

Organisations expected to participate include Joby Aviation, Eve Air Mobility, the FAA and Civil Air Patrol. The host centre supports research and testing through its SkyVision airspace-awareness system, a 225-square-mile beyond-visual-line-of-sight range and dedicated laboratory and hangar facilities.

NAAMCE offers access to the US National Airspace System at altitudes up to 18,000 feet. Its facilities include 30,000 square feet of laboratory, research and collaboration space, together with 25,000 square feet of hangar accommodation.

The workshops are organised around three themes. Beyond the Prototype considers operational and infrastructure requirements; The Digital Enterprise examines engineering, data and certification practices; and From Novelty to Normal addresses public acceptance. Bringing the results back to the wider audience is intended to connect those discussions with the forum's overall focus on scaling. The one-day programme places practical delivery questions alongside aircraft development as companies assess the resources and systems needed to support repeatable operations across a range of future aviation use cases.

Elroy Air completes autonomous cargo flights in Louisiana



Elroy Air has completed autonomous cargo flights under the US Department of Transportation and FAA's eVTOL Integration Pilot Program (eIPP), testing its Chaparral aircraft at Louisiana's Houma-Terrebonne Airport.

Conducted in late August with LIFTOFF Louisiana and Bristow Group, the week-long programme involved flights without an onboard pilot under air traffic control oversight. Cargo included medical supplies, packages, spare parts, food and water.

The work will provide operational evidence for integrating advanced aircraft into US airspace. Houma's significant rotorcraft activity also offered an opportunity to assess how autonomous cargo services could operate alongside conventional aviation.

Chaparral is a hybrid-electric VTOL aircraft designed to carry more than 500 pounds of cargo, with a stated maximum range of 450 miles. Its intended missions include commercial logistics, defence resupply and humanitarian support.

Elroy Air reports a commercial demand pipeline exceeding 1,400 aircraft, subject to future production and operating requirements. It expects its first production aircraft in late 2026, with manufacturing planned at Kratos Defense & Security Solutions' Sacramento facility.

Elroy Air was selected in March 2026 as part of Louisiana's involvement in the federal programme. The initiative is designed to help regulators and government agencies assess how advanced aircraft can be incorporated into the National Airspace System using evidence from actual operations.

Chaparral is intended to serve logistics routes without runways or other fixed infrastructure, with its hybrid-electric powertrain supporting longer missions than many smaller electric drones. The Louisiana flights tested a range of cargo types in an active aviation environment. For the company and its partners, that combination provides an opportunity to examine the operating requirements for uncrewed deliveries before such services are deployed more widely across commercial and other potential cargo markets.

WOMEN IN AAM

Join the Women in AAM Community and Help Shape the Future of Flight

The Advanced Air Mobility industry is moving rapidly from concept to reality and women across the sector are playing an increasingly important role in shaping its future.

From engineering and aviation to regulation, operations, infrastructure, investment and business development, women are contributing expertise and leadership to one of the most exciting emerging areas of mobility.

eVTOL Insights' Women in AAM community has been created to bring these voices together.

The community provides a dedicated platform for women working across AAM and related industries to connect, share experiences, exchange ideas and build meaningful professional relationships.

Whether you are an established industry leader, an emerging professional or working to bring new ideas and technologies to market, the community is designed to support and connect you with like-minded women.

Being part of Women in AAM is an opportunity to expand your network beyond your organisation, discover new perspectives and engage with professionals working across different parts of the global AAM ecosystem.

The community also supports greater visibility for the women helping to advance the industry, creating opportunities to share expertise, celebrate achievements and highlight the diverse career paths available within AAM.

As the industry develops, collaboration will be essential. Building stronger connections between women across organisations, disciplines and regions can help create a more inclusive and representative AAM sector.

Now is the time to get involved.

Join eVTOL Insights' Women in AAM community and become part of a growing network of women helping to define what the future of flight looks like. Becoming a member is free. Please send your name, job title and company along with a headshot image to editorial@evtolinsights.com

www.womeninaam.com

Mike Ross becomes interim CEO of Pivotal

Pivotal has appointed board member Mike Ross as interim CEO following Ken Karklin's departure after four years leading the light eVTOL developer.

Ross assumed the position on August 31, 2026, and remains on the board, which will begin the search for a permanent chief executive. Pivotal says its priorities and product roadmap are unchanged as development continues on its fourth-generation Helix aircraft.

His experience spans aviation, defence, autonomy and robotics, including roles at Jeppesen ForeFlight, Boeing, Skydio and Samsara. A former US Navy commander, fighter pilot and test pilot, Ross also served with the Defense Innovation Unit.

The transition follows several operational milestones. Pivotal says its BlackFly V3.3 fleet has exceeded 10,000 flights. In a public-safety demonstration, a BlackFly responding to a 911 call arrived 20 minutes ahead of an ambulance travelling in parallel.

Helix sales began in January 2024. Pivotal is also participating in the Multistate Collaborative eIPP, which is examining eVTOL integration into the US aviation system.

Pivotal has identified public safety, recreation and short-distance transport as potential markets for its aircraft. The Helix uses a tilt-wing configuration to take off and land vertically, allowing it to operate without a runway.

Ross's background combines military flying and testing with experience in commercial aviation software and autonomous systems. His previous work included a senior leadership position at Jeppesen ForeFlight and involvement in Boeing's uncrewed and Advanced Air Mobility business, alongside product roles at Skydio and Samsara.

Pivotal says the interim appointment will maintain continuity while the board searches for a permanent leader. Development of Helix will continue within the existing roadmap as the business builds on the operational experience gained through its BlackFly fleet and participation in integration programmes.

Heart Aerospace unveils ES36 with JSX purchase agreement



Heart Aerospace has unveiled its 36-seat ES-36 hybrid-electric regional aircraft, replacing the previously announced ES-30. US carrier JSX has signed a deposit-backed agreement for 50 aircraft, with purchase rights for another 50.

The revised design adds six seats and 1,415 pounds of payload capacity, increases of 20%, while retaining the earlier aircraft's maximum take-off weight and battery capacity.

Its series-hybrid propulsion system uses two nacelles, each housing a 1.65-megawatt electric motor driving a propeller. Heart says moving from four nacelles to two reduces propulsion components and is intended to improve efficiency and maintenance requirements.

The company states an all-electric range of 125 miles, plus reserves. For longer journeys, two turbogenerators supply electricity to the motors, extending the stated range to 745 miles, plus reserves.

Heart targets operating costs at least 40% below those of legacy regional aircraft. The ES-36's 95-foot wingspan is approximately 11 feet shorter than its predecessor's, while planned short-field capability is intended to support smaller airports. All-electric flights would operate without fuel burn.

Ground charging supplies the batteries used for electric operations. On extended flights, compact gas turbines drive the two megawatt-class turbogenerators, generating electricity for the propulsion motors rather than directly driving the propellers.

Heart says the two-nacelle arrangement reduces the number of propulsion components compared with the ES-30. The company is presenting the additional seating and payload within unchanged weight and battery limits as part of its effort to improve the economics of regional flying.

Its range figures equate to 200 kilometres in electric mode and 1,200 kilometres in hybrid operation, both with reserves. Heart also cites lower noise and zero operational emissions during all-electric flights, alongside the proposed aircraft's ability to serve constrained airports.

Electra tests helicopter style airport procedures



Electra has completed flight tests in Virginia examining how its fixed-wing Ultra Short aircraft could use heliports and other access points away from conventional airport runways.

Its hybrid-electric EL2 demonstrator flew as part of the Virginia Smart Airspace campaign under the FAA's eVTOL and Advanced Air Mobility Integration Pilot Program. Locations included Roanoke–Blacksburg Regional Airport, Virginia Tech/Montgomery Regional Airport and Blackstone Army Airfield, alongside sites in Newport News and Richmond.

The team tested take-offs and landings from small heliports, vertiports, taxiways and other access areas. Point-in-space approaches and dedicated instrument routes were tailored to the aircraft's short take-off and landing performance.

Over a year of preparation with programme partners and the FAA preceded the flights. The tests collected data on aircraft performance and the potential application of helicopter-style instrument procedures to fixed-wing AAM operations.

Participants included Virginia Tech, the Virginia Department of Aviation and PennDOT. Electra says the findings will support development of its larger EL9 and could inform future guidance for Ultra Short operations at commercial airports.

Virginia Smart Airspace has been developing instrument procedures and air traffic concepts for aircraft whose performance differs from conventional fixed-wing types. Programme partners worked on approaches and departures for heliports and vertiports, including ways to accommodate Ultra Short aircraft away from the main runway.

The testing examined those procedures in flight, allowing the team to compare operational data with the assumptions behind the routes and approaches. PennDOT is leading Virginia's involvement in the eIPP, bringing the state's work into the wider federal integration programme.

For Electra, the campaign is intended to establish evidence for airport access closer to population centres and support the integration of future fixed-wing AAM services into US airspace.

Behind Horizon Aircraft:
Brandon Robinson on leadership, risk and resilience

In October's CEO Feature, Horizon's CEO and co-founder Brandon Robinson discusses the lessons from flying, the personal pressures of entrepreneurship and the aircraft business he wants to build.



In October's CEO Feature, Horizon's CEO and co-founder Brandon Robinson discusses the lessons from flying, the personal pressures of entrepreneurship and the aircraft business he wants to build.

Horizon Aircraft's progress will be familiar to many eVTOL Insights readers. Behind those milestones, Brandon Robinson has been making a transition: from the founder handling patents, investor meetings and aircraft renderings to the CEO leading the team now carrying that work forward.

"I literally bought a computer and learned how to do renderings and to try to show the visual story and try to convince folks, hey, this is a real airplane with a viable configuration that will work," he recalls.

"You're very much involved in everything at the beginning. You have to be, because there's not enough folks to do it all."

Our conversation with Robinson explores that changing role and the choices behind Horizon's progress, from building a team he can trust to balancing engineering ambition with the demands of a viable aviation business.

"All of these people that you bring on board allow you to kind of step up and focus a little bit more on strategy and things like culture," he says.

A family cruise provided a useful comparison. A founder initially races around a small boat tending everything personally. A larger vessel demands a different approach.

“The captain manages the boat. They don’t do everything, right? And so that’s been the journey from initial startup to now, where I’m at currently. It’s more of keeping my eye on the big picture, making sure that we don’t paint ourselves into any programmatic corners.”

Building a team that can challenge him

The former fighter pilot describes himself as “a pretty technically and operationally oriented guy”. As Horizon grew, however, relationships within the business began taking more of his attention.

“Things that are easy to underappreciate from a CEO’s perspective once you’ve built a company a little bit further are the cultural aspects. So making sure that everyone’s properly





motivated, they're having fun, they work together."

That helps explain his presence in meetings where he has little to add to the technical discussion.

"I attend the meetings to see how everyone is kind of getting along," he says. "I want to see how the team is interacting, what their body language is, if they're still having fun."

Recruitment has consequences beyond filling a vacancy. Robinson warns that an experienced arrival can undermine junior engineers by belittling them instead of offering mentorship. Recognising that behaviour, and acting on it, is part of protecting the team.

Developing younger talent offers a more rewarding experience, particularly when promising engineers are given responsibility before they have accumulated years of experience.

"Take as much responsibility on as you can," he says, describing his encouragement to those colleagues. He wants to "watch them succeed with the right mentorship here and there", while "allowing them to fail every once in a while because they're probably not used to it".

That requires perspective from the person assigning the work, too. As Robinson puts it: "You probably failed because we told you to do the job of three people and you're just one person."

When assessing candidates, he wants evidence of what they have done with their opportunities.

"I want to see a track record of excellence and hands-on experience," he says. A degree matters, but practical projects can bring a candidate's capabilities into sharper focus.

"You were involved in a Formula SAE sort of electric racing programme on the side, on your own time. You led that programme and you built an electric race car. That's cool. Now I'm really interested."

The same curiosity applies to rocketry projects, industry placements and other experiences requiring teamwork under pressure. Alongside technical ability, he looks for qualities that allow people to reconsider their ideas.

"Humility and resilience are something we look for. Nothing can destroy a culture faster than someone who thinks they know it all," he says. "Stay humbly curious about everything and always question what you think you know."

His flying career made accountability unavoidable. Instrumentation recorded the aircraft's movements, leaving mistakes available for scrutiny after landing.

"You cannot hide from your mistakes. We learned from the very, very beginning that you are personally accountable," Robinson says. "Flying a jet that can travel up to almost two times the speed of sound can be a very humbling experience."

Even people accustomed to excelling

had to become comfortable with detailed criticism.

“When we do a debrief, we don’t talk about the things that we do well,” he says. “We talk about all the things that we did badly and how to improve those things.”

He asks for that same candour at Horizon, including feedback from his communications colleagues after interviews. If an answer wandered or something failed to land, he wants to hear it. Admitting an incorrect decision is equally straightforward.

“I got it wrong. Fair enough. You were right. I was wrong. Let’s do it your way. That’s fine,” he says.

“I weirdly, and it’s not a common trait, enjoy it because I get to update my thesis on the world. If I’m wrong about a topic, scientific, engineering, whatever, that’s good. Because then I get to update and have a better model of the universe.”

Preparation remains another lesson from flying, which he applies across the business, from legal and financial matters to marketing and the company’s external communications.

He has also revised his opinion of mission statements. Earlier in his career, discussing corporate purpose seemed less compelling than developing technology. Growth has made the value of a shared ambition clearer.

“You do start to understand the value of having a solid vision and solid mission statement that the whole company can get behind and that they know,” he says.

“When you join Horizon Aircraft, we’re building a revolutionary aircraft that will change the way people move around the planet and save lives.”

That ambition gives individual assignments a wider purpose, and gives Robinson something to preserve as more people join the business.

“It’s a thread that stitches everything together throughout the company,” he says. “Easy to underappreciate, but something I appreciate much more now.”

The personal cost of building Horizon

That sense of purpose has also been tested by the pressures of building the business. Robinson is candid about the mistakes along the way: “I have the scar tissue to prove it.”



“Being a really good Air Force pilot and fighter pilot does not mean that you’re going to be good at business,” he says.

“It’s very complicated. It has a lot more humanity baked in. It’s not just flipping switches in the right direction and pulling back on the stick and cows get smaller, sort of thing. You really have to know what you’re doing.”

He admits he initially underestimated that challenge and Robinson believes the strain carried by founders is often underestimated.

“It takes a bigger toll than people might think. Most successful entrepreneurs that have built a company over a certain size have these stories,” he says.

“You have to build a foundation to get lucky, if that makes any sense. And that’s through hard work, ingenuity, and having some really good people surround you.”

An aircraft that earns its place

Those experiences provide the backdrop to his commercial priorities for Horizon: building an aircraft that operators can put to profitable, practical use.

“You need to produce a useful product and it needs to be affordable and maintainable,” Robinson says.

“There has to be a viable business case that someone can take this airplane and they can use it to do useful work in the real world on a daily basis, repeatable over the next two decades, and they can make money doing that thing.”

He is sceptical of designing around an attractive collection of technologies, then searching for customers afterwards.

"The only viable way that's proven time and time again is to focus on the end user, focus on a mission set, distil that into specifications, and then build something that can meet those performance and economic metrics."

That conviction also explains his emphasis on delivering capability over accumulating advance orders.

"If we build the thing and it does what we say it's gonna do, we're not gonna be able to build enough of these things," he says. "So why am I worried about building some sort of order book?"

Delivering that capability also means being realistic about when the technology behind it will be ready. For Robinson, battery development illustrates why aircraft manufacturers need to look beyond an announcement and consider the time required to turn a promising result into something commercially usable.

He sees exciting progress in battery technology, but cautions against assuming improvements are exponential. Moving from a laboratory breakthrough to a viable commercial product can often take five to seven years or even longer. That makes the timeline behind a development just as important as its headline performance.

His caution centres on when those advances can realistically support an aircraft programme. Promising research gives manufacturers reasons for optimism, but incorporating it into an aircraft requires confidence in its commercial maturity and suitability for aerospace use.

Nor does he expect every development decision to arrive with complete information.

"We very rarely have all of the information available. So the first thing is to identify what information we don't have and whether that's critical or not," Robinson explains.

"Can we afford to wait? Or can we make a quick decision and get to testing?"

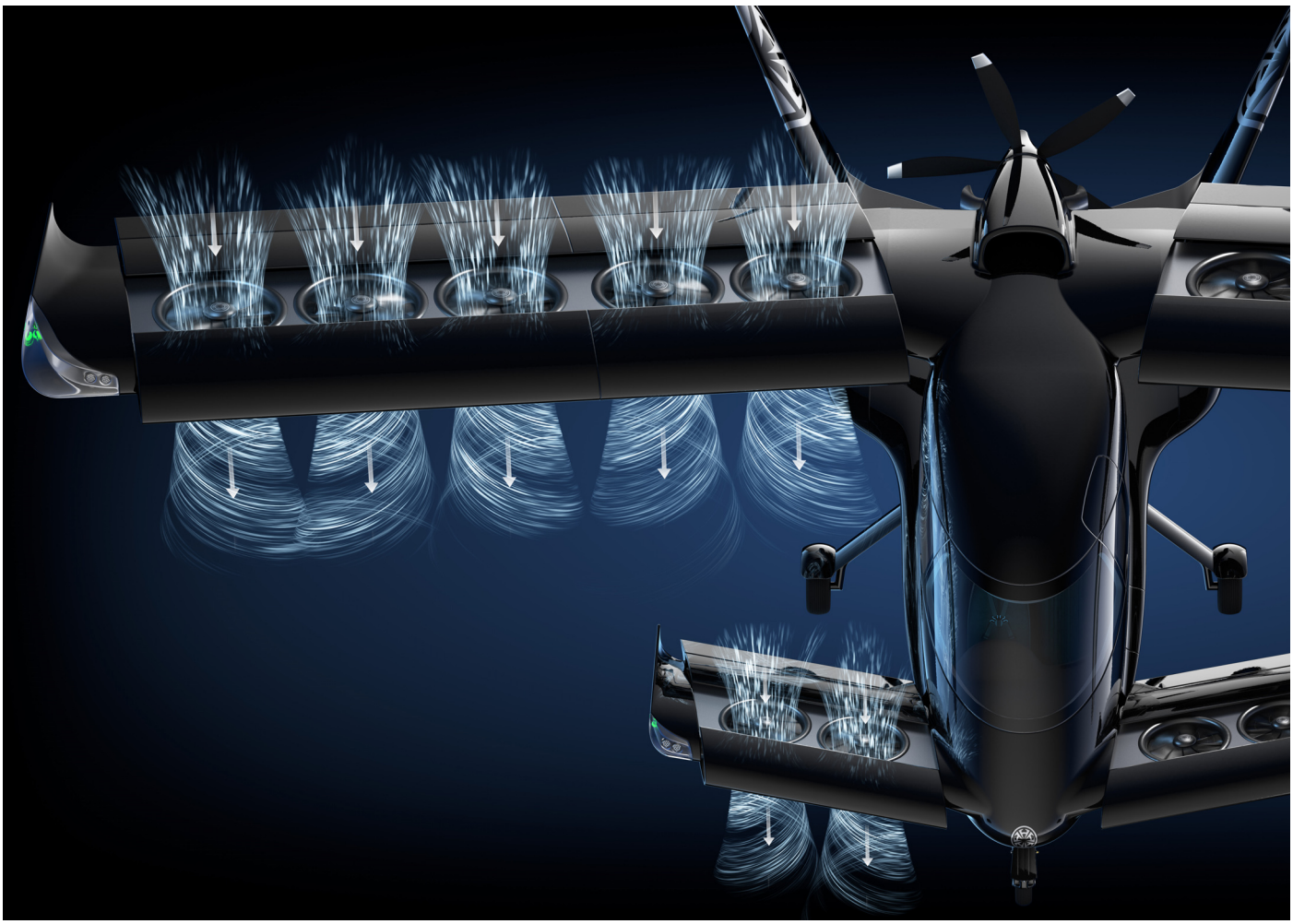
The team's experience becomes essential when judging those choices.

"They have instincts. They'll bring you the relevant information. They'll identify the critical things," he says.

"We're going to build a very safe aircraft, but we need to do it quickly and efficiently. We can't sit around for the next 20 years like some of the major OEMs can do."

For Robinson, risk also has to be considered across the entire programme. Rushing to demonstrate flight can create expensive redesign later if systems lack the foundations required for certification.





“Risk is neither created nor destroyed, really. It’s just pushed around,” he says, offering his own analogy. “You can’t just push it down the road because it’ll eventually catch up with you.”

Credibility through candour

He argues that investors deserve a clear explanation of those trade-offs.

“Be honest about the technical challenges that lie ahead,” he says. “As a public company, of course, we have to be forthright with all of our financial statements. So you can see exactly how much money we have in the bank, how much money we’re burning, and therefore how much runway we have.”

During the interview, he described a target of having a full-scale prototype within six months. If a timetable changes, he says he will explain the reasons.

“I don’t have to remember some narrative. I just tell them exactly where we’re at,” Robinson says. “Once the investors have the truth, then they can make proper decisions.”

He wants comparable clarity across advanced air mobility, particularly about where aircraft will fly and how operators will make money.

“Just be authentic. Tell everyone exactly what you’re doing and how this airplane specifically is going to make money and be a better product in the world,” he says.

“I wish I could be on a panel where we talked about operational realities and we got straight answers about these types of questions.”

Asked how he wants Horizon to be remembered, Robinson returns to the people building it and the work he hopes their aircraft will do.

“I would appreciate folks remembering us as a company that had a bunch of operators and real world engineers come together to do a fairly unique thing. To balance practicality with a lot of ingenuity and come up with a machine that is going to do some really amazing work around the world for the next several decades.”



North America Conference
Phoenix, Arizona - April 2027

Global AAM Awards - Early Bird entries now open

eVTOL Insights has officially opened entries for its Global AAM Awards 2027, inviting companies, teams and individuals from across the Advanced Air Mobility industry to submit entries recognising their achievements, innovation and contributions.

Following the success of previous editions, the 2027 Global AAM Awards will once again celebrate the organisations and individuals helping to shape the rapidly developing AAM ecosystem; from aircraft development and enabling technologies to infrastructure, autonomy, regulation, workforce development and wider industry collaboration.

The awards are designed to recognise both established industry leaders and emerging companies and talent, as well as providing an opportunity for organisations of all sizes to be recognised.

Early bird entries are now open, with the deadline set for December 31st, 2026. Entrants who submit before this date will benefit from the early bird entry rate of £249, before standard pricing comes into effect from January 1st, 2027 at a price of £299.

The Global AAM Awards will feature a range of categories designed to recognise excellence across companies, teams and individuals, with entries assessed by an independent judging panel comprising experienced professionals from across the AAM and aviation industries.

For full details about the categories, entry criteria and submission process, visit the Global AAM Awards 2027 submission platform.

Please note, once you have submitted your entry via the Awardforce platform, you will need to make a payment through eVTOL Insights Global AAM Awards 2027 Eventbrite page. Failures to do so will result in your entry not being considered for judging.

Women in AAM Special Report celebrates industry leaders



eVTOL Insights has published the 2026 edition of its Women in AAM Special Report, recognising women contributing to the development of Advanced Air Mobility around the world.

The edition features leaders across the sector, from CEOs shaping their businesses and teams managing daily operations to engineers developing the next generation of aircraft. It highlights the breadth of roles supporting the industry's progress.

The publication follows the combined Powerbook and Chief Technology Officer supplement released earlier in 2026, continuing eVTOL Insights' series profiling people across the global AAM community.

Readers can request a free copy through the download form linked in the original online announcement. Previous Special Reports are also available to explore.

The final Special Report planned for 2026 is Ones to Watch, scheduled for publication in November.

The Women in AAM edition puts people at the centre of the industry story. Alongside the aircraft and technologies that regularly make headlines, it recognises the work involved in leading companies, supporting colleagues and moving programmes forward. The profiles offer an opportunity to discover individuals working in different parts of the market and to recognise contributions beyond a single discipline.

For readers already familiar with AAM, the report provides a way to explore the people behind organisations and projects across the sector. For those entering the industry, its mix of leadership, operational and engineering roles offers an introduction to the range of careers contributing to its development.

Download the free edition to read the featured profiles and discover the women helping to shape the aircraft, businesses and teams behind Advanced Air Mobility. The report is available through eVTOL Insights, alongside the publication's collection of industry Special Reports available for readers to explore.

Fabrice Brégier appointed chair of Vertical Aerospace



Vertical Aerospace has appointed former Airbus Commercial Aircraft CEO Fabrice Brégier as chair as it advances certification and commercialisation of its all-electric Valo aircraft.

Brégier took up the position on September 21, 2026, succeeding interim chair Ben Story, who remains a board member. His career spans more than three decades in commercial aviation, helicopters, defence and technology.

At Airbus, he served as chief operating officer and subsequently led its commercial aircraft business, with involvement in the A350 programme and operational restructuring. He also led Eurocopter, held senior roles at Matra BAe Dynamics and MBDA, and was president of Palantir Technologies France from 2018 to 2024.

Vertical is developing hybrid-electric and autonomous technologies alongside Valo, with potential commercial and defence applications. Its work includes collaboration with Near Earth Autonomy and the government-backed ECLiPSE charging and thermal-management programme.

The company has also joined Honeywell-led Project VERTI-GO to support European eVTOL operations and airspace integration. Vertical says it is engaging with regulators in six international markets as it prepares for future commercial services.

Brégier led Airbus Commercial Aircraft from 2012 to 2016. His earlier positions included multinational defence programmes, adding experience that is relevant to Vertical's exploration of new markets beyond passenger services.

Vertical says the UK Ministry of Defence has expressed interest in its hybrid-electric and autonomous technologies. The company is also progressing propulsion, battery and charging systems as it develops its wider product offering.

CEO Stuart Simpson described the next stage as turning flight-test progress into a certified aircraft and a scaled aerospace business. The appointment brings experience in industrial transformation, aircraft programme delivery and international growth to the board as Vertical works towards those certification, commercialisation and business growth objectives.

UK CAA selects three hydrogen aviation projects

The UK Civil Aviation Authority has selected three projects for the latest round of its Hydrogen Challenge, examining aircraft turnaround, fuel storage and airside supply infrastructure.

Beyond Aero, London City Airport and the University of East London will jointly assess how hydrogen-electric aircraft could affect turnaround at a busy airport. Their work will also consider the skills and education needed to support hydrogen aviation.

DreamerBoy Technologies will develop and test NOVAE+, its cryogenic compressed hydrogen storage system. Designed to combine very low temperatures with high pressure, the technology aims to increase storage capacity while avoiding fuel losses through boil-off. Testing will generate safety and regulatory evidence.

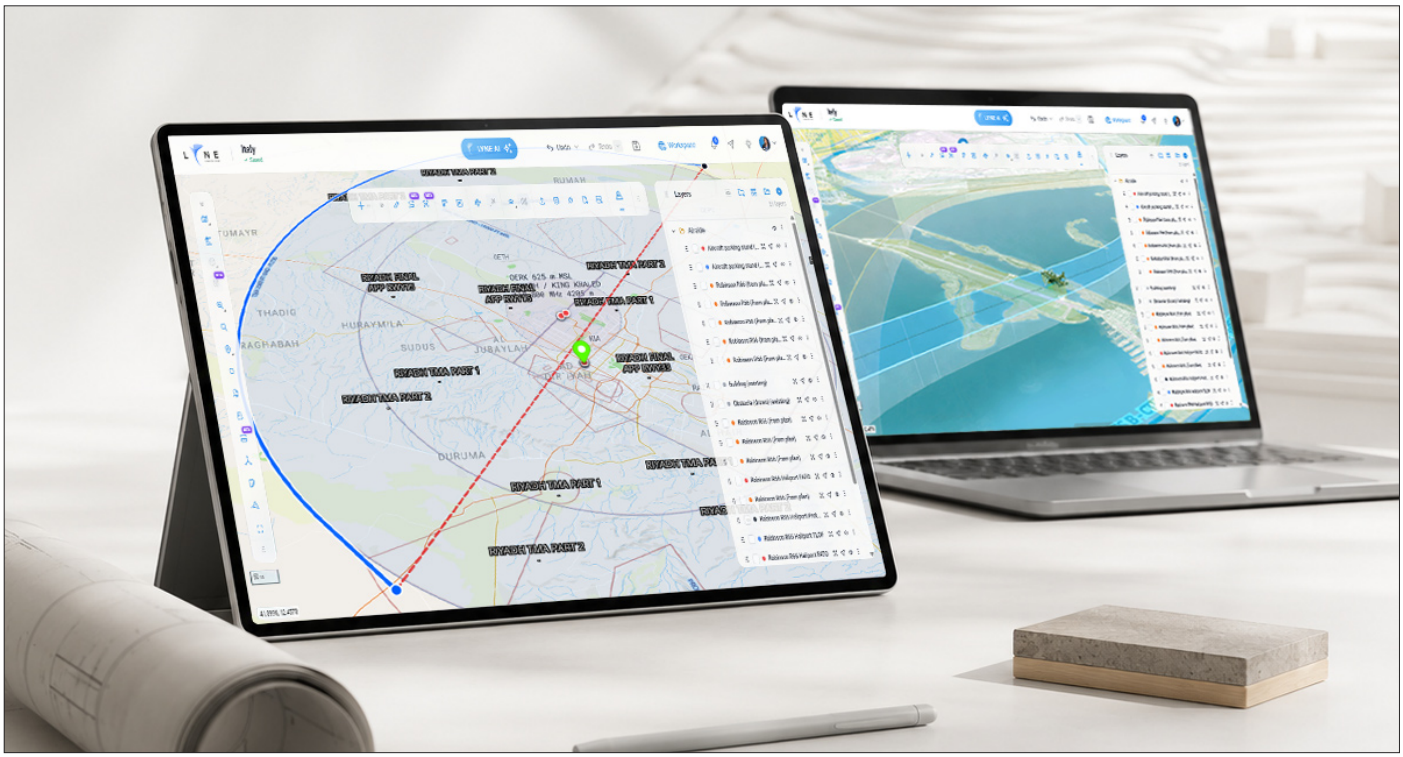
Saxon Air will study the infrastructure needed to store and supply hydrogen airside, including applications for ground support equipment and unmanned aircraft systems.

The CAA will work with all three projects to identify safety risks, regulatory requirements and gaps in existing frameworks. Their findings are intended to inform future guidance as hydrogen technologies move towards aviation use.

The latest selection is the third round of the Hydrogen Challenge and builds on earlier practical demonstrations. Previous projects included hydrogen-powered ground vehicles performing a zero-carbon aircraft turnaround at Exeter Airport. Rolls-Royce and easyJet also tested a modified Pearl 15 engine on hydrogen through take-off thrust and a simulated flight cycle.

Beyond Aero's proposed aircraft architecture combines fuel cells, gaseous hydrogen tanks and cooling technology. Its airport study will examine how that configuration could translate into ground operations. Across the three new projects, the regulator will consider both the technologies themselves and the operational arrangements needed to introduce hydrogen safely, including the implications for existing rules and future regulatory development for aircraft, airport operations and supporting infrastructure.

LYNEports launches aviation infrastructure planning platform



LYNEports has released the full version of its aviation infrastructure planning platform, following a public beta launched in May 2025.

The software brings airport, heliport, vertiport, drone infrastructure and aviation-related property planning into one environment. It is designed to help users assess a location's suitability before committing to detailed design or investment.

Planners can develop 2D layouts and 3D models while examining terrain, obstacles, wind, nearby development, utilities, grid connections and emergency requirements. Airspace analysis and visual and instrument flight-planning tools support assessments of routes and interactions with existing traffic.

Digital simulations allow aircraft and ground vehicle movements to be tested against proposed layouts. Estimated route emissions can also be compared alongside aircraft and operating choices.

The company's AirWorthy Readiness framework supports comparisons of individual sites and property portfolios, including constraints and indicative costs. Regulatory Framework Intelligence, which applies selected requirements and aircraft characteristics to designs, is available to Enterprise customers.

CEO Rasha Alshami says consolidating these tasks should give specialists more time for safety, operational decisions and professional judgement.

The platform can display current and historical flight activity around a proposed location, helping planners examine the relationship between new operations and established traffic. Its site tools also support comparisons of weaknesses or shortfalls across different properties.

Simulation covers aircraft clearances and ground vehicle circulation, allowing users to explore operational scenarios before construction. Fire and emergency provision, safety and access to power can be considered within the same process.

LYNEports positions the software as an early planning environment for infrastructure owners and developers. Bringing regulatory information, aircraft specifications and site assessments together is intended to reduce the need to manage separate tools, drawings and spreadsheets when evaluating aviation development opportunities.

Open Skies Network and Logan plan hydrogen infrastructure



Open Skies Network and hydrogen energy specialist Logan have signed a memorandum of understanding to develop infrastructure for hydrogen-powered aviation at UK regional airports and aerodromes.

Initial work will focus on commercial opportunities at Open Skies Network's early adopter locations. The partners will combine aviation infrastructure experience with expertise in hydrogen production, storage, refuelling and integrated energy systems.

Gaseous hydrogen provision for smaller airports, private aerodromes and general aviation is a central priority. The companies will investigate renewable-powered electrolysis for on-site production and hydrogen microgrids that could support aircraft refuelling, electric aircraft charging and local energy needs.

They intend to work with airports, manufacturers, regulators and other stakeholders to identify projects and pursue public and private investment and research funding.

Potential applications range from uncrewed aircraft and Advanced Air Mobility to regional passenger services. The partners aim to develop approaches that could be replicated elsewhere in the UK and internationally, while accounting for smaller sites' space constraints, traffic volumes and future demand.

Many larger hydrogen aviation initiatives concentrate on major airports and liquid hydrogen. This partnership instead begins with gaseous hydrogen and the requirements of regional and general aviation locations, where the scale and economics of infrastructure may differ.

On-site production could form one element of that approach, using renewable electricity to produce hydrogen through electrolysis. Integrated energy systems would allow the partners to consider aviation fuel supply alongside other demands on the site, rather than treating each requirement separately.

The memorandum establishes a framework for identifying those opportunities. The initial focus remains on assessing commercial prospects and working with stakeholders and funders to develop projects at the network's early adopter locations across the UK's regional airport and aerodrome network.

Drone trial to support electricity network fault detection



SP Electricity North West will trial remotely piloted drones at Lake District substations to assess whether they can accelerate fault detection and improve network monitoring.

The 12-month Project VOLT will deploy four Drone-in-a-Box systems for on-demand flights beyond visual line of sight. Skyports Drone Services will pilot the aircraft from its Buckinghamshire Remote Operations Centre, more than 200 miles away.

The partnership also includes eSmart Systems, with support from Ofgem's Network Innovation Allowance. Drone imagery and data will reach the electricity company's control centre, while eSmart's Grid Vision software will use AI-based analysis to identify faults and assess asset condition.

Following severe weather, the aircraft could help inspect damage where ground access is difficult and guide the deployment of repair teams. Routine surveys will also look for damaged insulators, overheating, loose connections and vegetation encroachment.

Skyports will manage approvals, deployment, remote flying and data capture. The trial will run alongside existing fault-response procedures and assess the scope for faster inspections, more proactive maintenance and reduced reliance on some helicopter surveys.

VOLT stands for Visual Overhead Line Tracking. The systems will be positioned at substations so aircraft can inspect nearby powerlines, combining rapid incident response with regular checks of network equipment.

The partners say repeat monitoring could build a longer-term picture of asset condition, making it easier to follow changes between inspections. eSmart Systems will process the captured information, while Skyports will handle its transfer to support analysis and operational decisions.

By assessing affected sections remotely, the trial aims to reduce delays in identifying damage when physical access is difficult. The project will examine how drone observations and automated analysis can complement established procedures for managing faults and maintaining electricity supplies.

SkyDrive and Verty explore South Korean services from 2028



SkyDrive and South Korean aviation company Verty have signed a memorandum of understanding to examine commercial eVTOL services in South Korea from 2028.

A joint feasibility study will assess flight safety, infrastructure and possible routes for SkyDrive's three-seat SD-05. Potential applications include tourism flights and regional inter-city transport, with Jeju Island and connections around the Seoul Metropolitan Area, including Goyang City, under consideration.

Verty is developing an operating model combining flight operations, air traffic management and vertiport management. It participates in government-led commercialisation projects and is working towards an Air Operator Certificate for eVTOL services.

Through its AAM as a Service model, Verty aims to give service providers access to operational capabilities without requiring them to build their own infrastructure. Its platform integrates flight, traffic and vertiport functions.

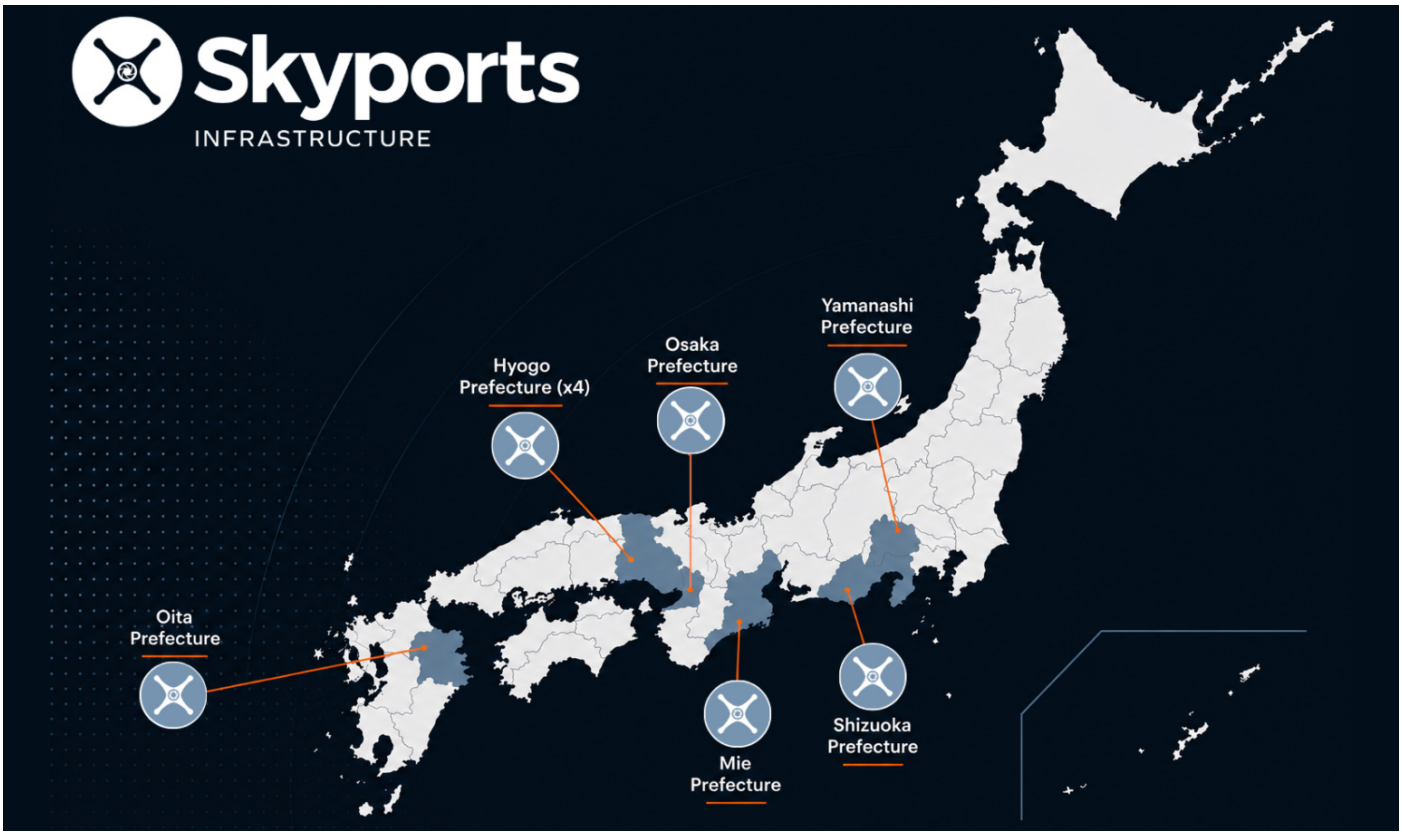
The proposed launch remains subject to the feasibility study, regulatory requirements and development of the necessary infrastructure and operating framework. The partners have not announced confirmed routes, service frequencies or fares.

South Korea's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport is overseeing commercialisation projects in which Verty is involved. The country has also been developing policy and demonstration programmes to examine AAM's place within its future transport system.

The feasibility work will give the companies an opportunity to assess the SD-05 against that emerging operating environment. Tourism and inter-city links present different route and infrastructure requirements, which the partners will consider alongside safety and operational planning.

Their agreement sets out an exploratory step towards the proposed 2028 timeframe. The study will need to establish how aircraft operations, traffic management and ground facilities could work together before the partners can define a commercial service and progress towards deployment within South Korea's developing AAM market.

Skyports secures nine AAM projects across Japan



Skyports Infrastructure has secured nine Japanese AAM subsidy projects in 2026, spanning six prefectures and covering vertiport planning, network development and commercial feasibility.

The company reports that every subsidy application it participated in this year was successful. Partners include Kanematsu Corporation, Mitsui Fudosan, Kyushu Railway Company and Suzuyo Corporation.

In Osaka, work covers a potential maintenance, repair and overhaul facility and the assessment of vertiport sites. Four Hyogo projects address feasibility, preliminary designs and operating concepts in Sumoto, Kinosaki Onsen, Kobe Waterfront and Arima Onsen.

Skyports is also assessing commercial prospects and vertiport locations in Oita. In Yamanashi, it is planning for a possible vertiport near a Linear Chuo Shinkansen station, while Shizuoka work involves site surveys and business feasibility.

A Mie project with Mitsui Fudosan and Ise-Shima Resort Management will examine an air taxi network centred on Ise-Shima and extending across Chubu and Kansai.

Together, the projects will explore tourism and regional connections, including how future AAM services could link with Japan's existing transport networks.

Kanematsu is leading the Osaka work, including the basic design and business case for the potential maintenance facility in Osaka City. The wider prefecture assessment will identify and evaluate possible vertiport locations.

Kyushu Railway Company leads the Oita initiative, while Suzuyo Corporation heads the Shizuoka feasibility project. Each combines local development questions with Skyports' planning and commercial assessment work.

The spread of projects allows different applications and locations to be investigated, from resort destinations and waterfront districts to potential links with rail infrastructure. Local authorities and industry partners will use the studies to assess where AAM could fit within the transport network and what infrastructure would be needed to support future commercial aviation services.

ARIDGE plans UAE flying car testing sandbox



ARIDGE has signed an agreement with Ras Al Khaimah authorities to establish an Advanced Air Mobility regulatory sandbox in the UAE, alongside a proposed demonstration route to Abu Dhabi.

The initiative, overseen by the UAE General Civil Aviation Authority and led by the Ras Al Khaimah Transport Authority, is intended to support flight validation, operational testing and regulatory development in a controlled environment.

The Chinese developer plans desert-condition trials and assessments across different operating scenarios. Work on the proposed inter-emirate route would cover airspace coordination, flight planning, ground support, passenger handling, turnaround and safety management.

ARIDGE recently demonstrated its Land Aircraft Carrier at Emirates Palace in Abu Dhabi. The modular system combines a ground vehicle with a detachable air module intended for short-range personal flight.

The company says the module incorporates redundant propulsion, power, communications and flight-control systems, with pilots able to override autonomous functions. Experience from the sandbox and route demonstrations is intended to inform potential commercial operations in the UAE and other markets.

The sandbox will also give ARIDGE a setting in which to work with authorities and industry partners on operating procedures within controlled airspace. Flight trials are intended to examine aircraft performance in the local environment, while the route study looks at the requirements for services between emirates.

The two strands bring aircraft validation and operational planning into the same programme. Ground handling and turnaround will be considered alongside airborne operations, with safety management included in the proposed framework.

ARIDGE describes the UAE work as part of its international expansion strategy. The agreement and proposed demonstration route represent preparatory activities for possible services, rather than an announcement that commercial passenger operations on these routes have begun.

Kite Aero starts Australian production with Sykes

Kite Aero has begun manufacturing its KITE autonomous logistics aircraft with Sykes Advanced Manufacturing at Geelong, Victoria.

The partnership provides an Australian-owned production base combining composite manufacturing, large-format 3D printing and five-axis CNC machining. The companies intend to serve commercial and defence customers while retaining manufacturing and intellectual property in Australia.

Kite Aero reports a pipeline of more than 100 aircraft as it increases production capacity. KITE is designed to deliver supplies where conventional transport is difficult or inefficient, supported by the company's AXIOM software and operational platform.

According to Kite Aero, the aircraft has completed more than 2,000 flights and 800 flight hours under current ownership, in addition to 11,000 flights and 2,500 hours previously recorded.

Sykes Advanced Manufacturing is part of Jeff Sykes & Associates and operates two Geelong facilities with a combined 6,500 square metres of composites manufacturing capacity. The agreement extends its manufacturing activities into uncrewed aviation and places KITE production within a Five Eyes-aligned supply chain.

The manufacturing partner brings a history dating back to 1966 and experience applying composite production techniques in other sectors. Its capabilities include tooling, component manufacture and precision machining, alongside large-format additive manufacturing.

For Kite Aero, the Geelong agreement connects established flight operations with the production capacity needed to address its reported demand pipeline. For Sykes, it extends the application of its composites expertise to aircraft intended for repeated autonomous logistics missions.

The companies say keeping production onshore will support Australian ownership of both manufacturing and intellectual property. With work underway, Kite Aero's next focus is increasing output while maintaining the operational and manufacturing processes required to deliver aircraft for future commercial and defence customers seeking autonomous aerial logistics capabilities.

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