

Canadian Traffic Network Relies on R44 Newscopters



Photo credit: CTN Network

An R44 Newscopter hovers near Toronto's CN Tower.

The Canadian Traffic Network (CTN) is the largest traffic reporting provider in Canada and relies on six R44 Newscopters to provide commuters with high definition, live-traffic coverage in Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, and Toronto. A subsidiary of the Global Traffic Network, CTN provides traffic and news programming to over 18 million Canadians.

Since CTN launched in 2006, the R44 Newscopter has been the company's helicopter of choice. CTN's Newscopters fly twice a day, seven days a week covering morning and evening commutes, and are on call 24/7 in the event of breaking news. Collectively, the fleet flies approximately 3000 hours annually. When asked why CTN only uses the R44 Newscopter, "It works for us," stated Tracey Hemphill, CTN's National Director of Operations.

CTN owns the helicopters, but contracts with LR Helicopters in Calgary to supply the pilots. The fleet is serviced by Genesis Helicopter Service, a Robinson service center, also in Calgary.

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FAA Certifies R66 Newscopter



Photo credit: SKY Helicopters; Photographer: Skip Robinson

SKY Helicopter's R66 Newscopter over Dallas, Texas.

ON July 13, 2017, Robinson Helicopter Company received FAA certification for its R66 Turbine Newscopter. The electronic news gathering (ENG) helicopter provides television news stations with a reliable and fully equipped aerial platform.

Powered by the Rolls-Royce RR300 turbine engine, the four-place R66 Newscopter delivers greater capacity and increased altitude performance. The standard ENG package includes a five-axis, gyro stabilized gimbal that houses an Ikegami HD camera and Canon's 22-to-1 HD lens. For tighter coverage, an optional gimbal that accommodates the camera and Canon's 40-to-1 lens is available.



R66 Newscopter aft compartment.

Also, standard are Garmin's G500H PFD/MFD system, Garmin's GTN 650 navigator, three HD micro cameras, two seven-inch monitors, and two Geneva digital audio controllers. In the aft compartment, camera controls are located on the center and laptop consoles, and images display on several HD monitors. A multitude of options are available including a HeliSAS autopilot and air conditioning.

On July 24th, Robinson delivered the first production R66 Newscopter to SKY Helicopters, Robinson's dealer in Garland, Texas. SKY, a leading provider of ENG services, operates twelve R44 Newscopters.



Southern Utah University Adds Second Cadet



Southern Utah's Richard Cannon and Ryan Dejong prepare to depart RHC.

On August 18th, Southern Utah University (SUU) took delivery of its second R44 Cadet. SUU is expanding its Aviation Sciences Program to meet the industry's growing demand for professional pilots

SUU's first Cadet was delivered in April. The second Cadet arrived just in time for the fall semester. The program's enrollment sharply increased for the fall semester, from 200 to almost 300 students. Sixty percent are rotorcraft students who will pursue careers in EMS, tourism, forestry, law enforcement, and energy exploration.

The Aviation Sciences program began in 2013 with one R44 Raven II, one R22, and one Bell 206. According to Richard Cannon, SUU's Director of Flight Operations, the Cadet performs exceptionally well at high altitudes (the university's airport field elevation is 5,600 ft); and Jared Britt, Director of Maintenance, says the Cadet's performance characteristics have exceeded their expectations. Both Cadets are equipped for VFR and IFR training, and the university expects to log between 1000-1500 hours per aircraft per year.

R22 Pilot Saves Cattle After Hurricane Harvey

In the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, R22 pilot Ryan Ashcraft, 22, along with pilot buddies Charles Short and Robbie Benavides flew three Robinson helicopters to flooded pastures in the Houston area locating and rescuing thousands of stranded cattle.

Leading the rescue effort was Ashcraft and friend John Fitzgerald. Ashcraft hovered over pastures while Fitzgerald jumped into raising flood waters cutting and opening fences. Once released, the cattle were herded to higher ground using the helicopters. Aware of the difficulties people were facing after the hurricane, Ashcraft said he was glad to help.



Ryan Ashcraft herds cattle to safety.

Photo credit: Logan Goudeau

R44 Raven II Fights the Good Fight



Nico Jacobs sets down in Africa's savannah

Photo credit: Leoni Jacobs, Rhino 911

Pilot Nico Jacobs uses an R44 Raven II to help conservationists save the wild African rhino whose population is declining at an alarming rate. Jacobs, along with his wife, Leoni, and close friends Amer Smailbegovic and Fred Hees cofounded Rhino 911 in 2016. Their objective is to stop the illicit and inhumane hunting of rhinos in South Africa's North West Province.

Driven by Asia's illegal trade market, rhino horn is a \$10 billion a year industry. In the early 20th century approximately 500,000 rhinoceroses roamed Asia and Africa. Today, that number has dropped to 29,000. Flying in support of the rhinos is Jacob's passion, trading his pilot services for the use of an R44. He has been shot at numerous times, but when a call comes he doesn't hesitate to respond. Using the R44, Jacobs can quickly transport veterinarians and conservationists to remote areas of the African savannah, allowing them to track the animals and treat those that have been targeted. A skilled helicopter pilot with 4000 hours, Jacobs favors the R44, which he calls, "a most amazing and reliable machine."

The South African government reported 1175 rhinos were illegally killed in 2015. In 2016 (Rhino 911's first year of operation), 1054 rhinos were killed, a 10.3% decline.

R44 Newscopter Films Remote Greenland



R44 Newscopter sits on the barren landscape of Greenland.

Photo credit: Eddie and Amanda Kisfaludy

On April 5th, marine biologist and National Geographic researcher Eddie Kisfaludy with his wife, Amanda, visited Robinson Helicopter Company.



Eddie and Amanda Kisfaludy in Greenland.

Photo credit: Selfie

The couple, who in 2016 flew an R44 Newscopter across the North Atlantic from Great Britain to California, shared their story with RHC.

The 8000-mile, 30-day journey served two purposes: to transport the helicopter from the UK to Eddie's San Diego based company SciFly, and to gather data from some of the most harsh and remote environments on the planet.

On August 5, 2016, the pair departed from Denham, England, flying north to Scotland then west to the Faroe Islands. From the Faroe Islands, they headed to Iceland then across Greenland to Canada, and finally to the U.S.

Greenland was the most difficult leg of the trip, but also the most awe-inspiring. They spent a week in Iceland and another week in Greenland camping and filming. They were spellbound by Greenland's glaciers, icebergs, and turquoise waters.

The images captured by the Newscopter depict remote parts of the Arctic, never before filmed, and documents the changing landscapes of Greenland and Iceland.

Robinson Delivers 800th R66

In June, Robinson Helicopter Company delivered R66 S/N 0800 to longtime dealer Heliflite China. On September 8th, Heliflite China presented the white and red helicopter to their customer in the Hubei province, who will use the helicopter for tours and training. S/N 0800 is the first R66 to operate in the Hubei province.



Delivery ceremony in China.

Photo credit: Heliflite China

UK Team Flies R66 Around the World



Peter Wilson and Matthew Gallagher.

Peter Wilson and Matthew Gallagher flew an R66 around the world. Their adventure began on April 8th and ended on August 8th, at Booker Airfield near London, England. Flying 121 days, 32,000 nm, over 43 countries, the duo circumnavigated the globe, touching the equator in both the eastern (Palembang, Indonesia) and western (Neiva, Colombia) hemispheres.

Wilson chose the R66, which is owned by Helicopter Services Ltd. at Wycombe Air Park, because of its cargo compartment, long range capabilities, fuel economy, and reliability. The around-the-world trip was the second of a three part series that Wilson calls *Three Journeys Round*. Last year, Wilson became the first helicopter pilot to fly the perimeter of Africa, 16,600 nm through 23 countries. The purpose of each journey is to meet people whose stories raise awareness of global issues. Wilson shares his experiences through Facebook.

For both trips, Wilson claims the aircraft performed "flawlessly," which he attributes to the way the aircraft was flown as well as maintained. Having flown through some particularly harsh environments, the Sahara (three times), Namibia, West Africa, Pakistan, and India, inspections and maintenance before and during each trip were essential.

Lightweight Lithium-ion Battery Available for R66

On July 14, 2017, Robinson Helicopter Company added the TB17 Lithium-ion battery to its R66 options. TB17 by True Blue Power, a division of Mid-Continent Instrument, offers substantial weight savings, improved starter performance, and longer life.

At 16 lb, the TB17 is significantly lighter than the R66's standard battery that weighs 42 lb and the optional 52 lb high-capacity battery. Lithium-ion chemistry holds a higher charge voltage and provides a more constant discharge rate than lead-acid delivering consistent, more reliable turbine starts. The battery's internal heater enhances functionality in cold temperatures as low as -40°C. Typical battery life is eight years with minimal required maintenance (visual inspection and capacity check) every two years.

A cockpit indicator warns the pilot if a battery fault is detected. During fault conditions, the battery automatically takes itself off-line. Built-in circuitry prevents overcharge and/or overheating, and the TB17's advanced Nanophosphate® chemistry is much less susceptible to thermal runaway than many other Lithium-ion batteries.

The TB17 Lithium-ion battery is only available on new production R66s.



The TB17 Lithium-ion battery installed in an R66.



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