

## Robinson Introduces Garmin TXi Displays

Robinson added Garmin's new G500H TXi displays to its R44 and R66 options. The new TXi displays add touchscreen functionality to Garmin's popular G500H display system, and consolidate PFD/MFD information on to a single screen. The upgraded displays provide increased resolution and interface with Garmin's GTN 6xx/7xx touchscreen GPS series.



R66 with Garmin GDU 1060 TXi Display.

The GDU (Garmin Display Unit) 1060 TXi is a 10.6-inch display installed in Robinson's large G500H console with room beneath for any Garmin GTN 6xx/7xx and a Genesys SAS/Autopilot.

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## 2018 Looks Good for Robinson



*New options drew large crowds to the Robinson booth.*

**L**AST year was a good year for Robinson Helicopter Company according to President Kurt Robinson. At Robinson Helicopter Company's HAI Heli-Expo Press Conference held February 27th, Robinson reported the company produced 77 R66s, 194 R44s and 34 R22s for a total of 305 helicopters, a 30% increase over 2016. Robinson went on to say 80% percent of the company's deliveries were outside the United States with orders coming from many different countries indicating the world's economy is improving.

According to Rolls Royce, the supplier of the R66's RR300 engine, the R66 fleet flew a total 185,000 hours last year, up from 150,000 in 2016, bringing the grand total of hours flown to 735,000. Robinson noted there are now more than 800 R66s flying worldwide and operator feedback has been very positive.

To further increase the R66's appeal, the company is offering a multitude of new R66 options. The lithium battery was introduced in July and reduces the aircraft's gross weight by 26 pounds. Robinson pointed out that when you usually talk ounces, 26 pounds is significant. The R66 cargo hook, designed for external loads up to 1200 pounds, and the R66 wire strike prevention system (made in conjunction with Magellan Aerospace) were unveiled at the Heli-Expo convention. Demand for both options has been strong with certification expected in late March. Another addition, unveiled at the convention and something Robinson is sure people will like, is the R66 front and rear heated seats. Robinson was quick to note that this



*Kurt Robinson updates the media.*

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## R44 Pilot Finds Teenager



Photo credit: Lee Mitchell

*Pilot Lee Mitchell*

Tony Lethbridge of New South Wales, Australia knew something wasn't right when his 17-year-old son, Samuel, failed to come home after a Saturday night out with friends. On Monday morning, after two sleepless nights and no word from Samuel, Lethbridge took matters into his own hands and hired an R44 to find his son.

With \$1,000 in hand, Lethbridge and his brother Michael drove to Skyline Aviation located at the Lake Macquarie Airport. R44 pilot Lee Mitchell and Michael (Tony is prone to air sickness) took off in a R44 and within 15 minutes spotted Samuel's car hidden in bush, approximately twelve miles from his home. While the crashed vehicle was visible from the air, it was impossible to see from the road. Emergency services were contacted and transported Samuel to a hospital in serious but stable condition. Wanting to contribute to Samuel's care, Skyline Aviation later returned the \$1,000 to the family.

## R22 SN 0146 Going Strong



Photo credit: Smoketown Helicopters

*R22 SN 0146 takes off for flight training.*

Nicknamed "the pumpkin" due to its orange paint scheme, R22 SN 0146 is still going strong 37 years after rolling off Robinson's assembly line.

Smoketown Helicopters (Lancaster, Pennsylvania) flies the R22 about 20 hours a week for flight training and charters.

## Longtime RHC Safety Course Instructor Retires

Ken Obi, a Robinson Pilot Safety Course instructor since 2002 hung up his khaki colored flight suit on September 13th 2017.

Obi who is also a long time Robinson dealer (Orbic Helicopters, Camarillo, CA) holds commercial and CFI ratings and has 17,400 total flight hours with 12,000 of those in Robinsons. "Flying with pilots from all over the world with varying degrees of experience, from private to military trained, taught me a lot and made me a better instructor" said Obi.

"Ken Obi is one of the most competent, sincere flight instructors I have encountered in my 48 years of flying.

His knowledge, proficiency, and professionalism while a Robinson Safety Course instructor reflects great credit on himself, Robinson Helicopter Company, and the entire helicopter instructor community," said Chief Safety Instructor Tim Tucker.

Following Obi's last safety course flight, RHC president Kurt Robinson greeted Obi on the tarmac and presented him with a plaque recognizing Obi's years of service, dedication, and contribution to safe flying.

Ken, you'll be missed.



*Ken Obi with Kurt Robinson after Obi's last flight.*

## R44 Helicopter Rescues Baby Elephant



Photo credit: Mara Elephant Project

*The Mara Elephant Project's R44 at work on the savanna.*

November 2017, Kenya's Mara Elephant Project (MEP) used an R44 to rescue a premature baby elephant found wasting away on the savanna. Half the weight of a normal newborn and unable to walk, the elephant was transported, via helicopter, to the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust Orphanage in Nairobi.

The cheetah-painted R44 provided by Karen Blixen Camp and Ree Park Safari is the only wildlife purposed helicopter operating in the Masai Mara National Game Reserve, an area of preserved savannah wilderness in southwestern Kenya. The R44 is an essential tool in the MEP's mission to protect the African elephant and to mitigate human-elephant conflict. According to Claire Bolles, MEP Communications Director, "MEP's R44 helicopter has been a life saver for the elephants and people in the Mara."

At last check, the premature elephant is gaining weight, walks and goes by Panya. MEP's goal is to return her to the wild when she's ready.

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## Robinson Introduces Garmin TXi Displays



R44 with Garmin GDU 700L TXi display installed in the new compact instrument console.

The GDU 700L TXi is a 7-inch display installed in Robinson's new compact console with room beneath for any Garmin GTN 6xx. The 700L TXi display was designed specifically for Robinson and allows the pilot to switch between a full-screen PFD or full-screen moving map. The compact console configuration eliminates the need for a separate GTN GPS console in front of the pilot.

Both TXi displays support the same optional equipment interfaces, such as XM weather data and radar altimeter, as the non-touchscreen G500H display. The displays also enhance the clarity of the optional Helicopter Synthetic Vision Technology.

## R66 Cargo Hook Makes Debut

Robinson's cargo hook for the R66 Turbine debuted at Heli-Expo 2018 and generated a steady stream of visitors to the static display area. The optional cargo hook installation carries external loads up to 1200 lb and, for external load operations, the R66's maximum gross weight increases from 2700 lb to 2900 lb.

Two installations of the hook are available:

- Basic includes the cargo hook and right-seat controls allowing operations from the pilot seat only.
- Advanced includes the cargo hook, right and left-seat controls, a left-seat hydraulic switch, and a left-seat start button. A load-weight gauge and a second set of engine power gauges (torque and gas temperature) are located in the left door sill allowing the pilot to monitor engine operations while keeping an eye on the external load. Provisions for remote control of external equipment (e.g., long line hook or a water dropping bucket) are also included.

Additional options are available for both installations.



Optional cargo hook installed on R66 Turbine.

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## 2018 Looks Good

option (to his knowledge) is not available on any other helicopter.

Lastly, Robinson talked about Garmin's TXi (touchscreen) Display Units (GDUs), two exciting new options for the R44 and R66. The GDUs along with the Genesys HeliSAS autopilot, introduced in 2015, were attracting a lot of attention at Robinson's booth. Certification of the GDUs is expected in the spring.



R66 with optional wire strike protection kit.

Projects on the horizon include a video recorder mounted in the aft cabin of the R22, R44 and R66 that takes visual and audio recordings of the flight deck. Robinson believes the recorder will be a useful tool for charter operators, flight schools, and accident investigations. An engine data recorder that monitors rotor and engine RPM, cylinder head and oil temperatures, manifold pressure, and outside air temperature on the R22 and R44 is also in development. Robinson is hopeful the R22/R44 data recorder will be standard equipment by year end. Robinson added the company is very involved with the Piston Aviation Fuels Initiative which is dedicated to developing unleaded fuels for piston engines.

With regards to competition, "We have always been upfront and have provided customers with as much information as possible about our products. We want customers to make an informed choice, if the R44 or R66 is the right helicopter for them, they'll buy it," concluded Robinson.

## Robinson Product Support: "The Undisputed Leader"

According to *Professional Pilot Magazine*, Robinson is the undisputed leader in piston helicopter product support. In *Professional Pilot's Helicopter Product Support Survey*, Robinson took 1st place for the 15th year in a row. *Professional Pilot* called Robinson the benchmark for piston helicopter support. Robinson's total score was 8.15 out of 10, higher than any other manufacturer, piston or turbine.

With only seven surveys returned by R66 operators, Robinson didn't qualify for the turbine support category. The survey requires a minimum of 35 evaluations for inclusion. R66 operators must be having too much fun flying.



*Robinson's Technical Support and Customer Service Team.*



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