AIRBUS HELICOPTERS PARTNERS WITH BLADE TO BOOST URBAN AIR MOBILITY BUSINESS

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Strategic alliance and investment in Blade will expand new market opportunities for on-demand helicopter services

Airbus Helicopters and Fly Blade, Inc. ("Blade"), a digitally-powered aviation leader servicing 22 core routes in 7 U.S. states, have signed a strategic partnership to develop new premium on-demand helicopter flight experiences, paving the way for enhanced urban air mobility solutions to benefit the future of vertical flight.

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“Airbus continues to develop the future of the urban air mobility (UAM) market, and this partnership is the next logical step in our quest to offer customers the full spectrum of urban air travel solutions,” says Matthieu Louvot, Executive Vice President of Customer Support and Services for Airbus Helicopters. “We are constantly seeking out new opportunities to add another dimension to urban transport networks. By partnering with Blade, we are setting a strong foundation for the next step, which will be the successful deployment of electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) systems.”

Launched in 2014, Blade arranges more civilian transport by helicopter than any other company in the U.S. and specializes in offering customers a seamless end-to-end flying experience. The partnership agreement will allow Airbus Helicopters to incorporate Blade’s unique expertise developed in the US market with premium services such as comprehensive booking and operator technology platforms, “gate to helicopter” airport transfers, multi-state lounge network and high touchpoint customer experience into its overall on-demand helicopter services portfolio. This strategic alliance complements Airbus’ Voom offering in emerging markets. It will not only increase customer access to helicopters in urban areas, but it will bring more business to operators as their helicopters will be used more frequently in this new market environment.

“Airbus is the right partner for Blade to help accelerate our expansion into additional U.S. cities and to fortify our international development plans,” said Rob Wiesenthal, CEO of Blade. “We look forward to helping Airbus enhance its business-to-consumer relationships. Together, we will grow on-demand helicopter aviation by broadening consumer accessibility today, and facilitating the transition to eVTOL tomorrow.”

The partnership with Blade will complement Airbus’ global UAM business strategy, which is already in swift development through Voom, the fast expanding helicopter taxi service which has flown thousands of passengers since it launched commercial operations in April 2017 in Sao Paulo and Airbus Ride, an event-based helicopter shuttle service in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

These new UAM services dedicated to operators and passengers are a major pillar of Airbus’ bold vision for the future of electronic vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) systems. Airbus is advancing in parallel on the platform and air traffic management side on a series of innovations to develop a game changing offer in the eVTOL marketplace. Current Airbus projects include the four passenger, self-piloted CityAirbus eVTOL demonstrator; the single passenger, self-piloted Vahana eVTOL aircraft by A^3; the Altiscope project by A^3 helping to shape future regulations and air traffic control requirements to safely integrate eVTOLaircraft in urban skies; autonomous urban parcel delivery by drones through the Skyways project; and finally the Racer high-speed demonstrator, which aims to connect the heart of distant cities.

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