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**EASTERN REGION HELICOPTER COUNCIL REAFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO ADDRESS NOISE AFFECTS ON LONG ISLAND**

**Port Jefferson, NY, May 20, 2008** -- "The residents of Long Island should already be hearing the benefits of our landmark agreement with the East End airports and through the use of the new North Shore helicopter routing," says David Nuss, Eastern Region Helicopter Council (ERHC) Chairman. "The ERHC is reaffirming its long-standing commitment to pursuing practical, balanced solutions to ensure the continued safe and efficient use of the local airspace, while maintaining a major focus on community compatibility."

While the helicopter noise issue has been widely reported in the local media, it is important to clarify some apparent misunderstandings on how and why helicopters fly where they do and what Long Islanders should expect this summer season and beyond.

The new North Shore Route is located approximately one-mile out over Long Island Sound and extends from the lighthouse off Sands Point all the way to Orient Point. ERHC is encouraging its members and other area helicopter operators of the larger, twin-engine aircraft to fly at the route's suggested minimum altitude of 2,500 feet when weather and operational conditions permit. Smaller and single-engine helicopters will continue to fly closer to shore, sometimes over land, but, when possible at altitudes of 2,500 foot or higher. Helicopters flying to or from the East End airports are expected to transition off the North Shore Route at 2,500 feet or higher and then follow each of the airport's voluntary noise abatement procedures, weather permitting.

"This higher suggested altitude should provide significant relief to those communities along Long Island's North Shore that previously expressed helicopter noise concerns," says Nuss. "You will still see and hear helicopters flying over Long Island as they routinely carry out their missions, but at reduced sound levels."

Helicopters utilizing other recommended FAA routes or flying elsewhere over Long Island are also encouraged by the ERHC to fly as high as possible and avoid residential areas. However, with safety as the primary concern, weather and other operational conditions may sometimes require helicopter operators to fly lower and over populated areas. Lastly, it is important to note that in addition to the heavily reported use of helicopters that transport passengers to and from East End, there are many other missions that helicopter operators routinely undertake, such as law enforcement, military, emergency medevac, electronic news gathering and various utility work – uses that all Long Islanders benefit from.

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ERHC's continued commitment to community compatible flying is nothing new. "ERHC members have, without fanfare, been voluntarily flying longer flights and following requested routings on the helicopter route charts and at airports around the region for decades. In fact, ERHC earned the very first Fly Neighborly Award in 1982 from the Helicopter Association International for our community-focused efforts", says Nuss. Since then, ERHC leaders have won seven awards from HAI for community service, safety, and business leadership, as recently as February 2008. Four ERHC members have served as Chairman and one is now President of HAI.

"ERHC's members have a demonstrated record of leadership and achievement. Our members provide the safest mode of transportation in the area. This is a professional community that is a recognized national leader and should be a celebrated asset of the region," said Nuss.

As the peak season for helicopter use and travel approaches, ERHC invites news media to meet and further discuss these issues with Chairman Nuss and Special Advisor Robert Grotell this Thursday, May 22, on Long Island. Contact Robert Grotell for details at 646 512 2370.

*ERHC is the northeast's leading organization for helicopter professionals and an expert resource for the public. Founded in 1977, its volunteer leaders continue to work with communities, FAA, and their members for enhanced safety, professionalism, and efficiency. Learn more about the ERHC and its initiatives at its web sites [www.erhc.org](http://www.erhc.org) and [www.flyneighborly.net](http://www.flyneighborly.net)*

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