

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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S64 Automatic Flight Control System Receives FAA Certification

*Modernized autopilot system is the product of a partnership
between Erickson Air-Crane & Stilwell Baker Inc.*

ORLANDO, Fla. — Erickson Air-Crane (EAC) and Stilwell Baker Inc. (SBI) announced that the modernized S64 Automatic Flight Control System (AFCS), which the two companies developed jointly, has received FAA certification. To lower the support costs associated with the S64's original complex mechanical gyro system and to further improve the aircraft's unsurpassed ability to perform precision placement of external loads, Erickson partnered with SBI. Together, the two companies designed, engineered and certified the new autopilot system using modern electronic components utilizing solid state Air Data Attitude Heading Reference System (ADAHRS) inputs.

"This successful, yet challenging project resulted in a 50% improvement in the S-64 AFCS's reliability, a 33% reduction in system weight, and significantly improved aircraft performance and stability," said SBI President David Valaer. "And our customers now have a spare parts supplier and product support provider to serve them through the foreseeable future."

"We were faced with some tough decisions," said Brian Terhune, senior project engineer for Erickson Air-Crane. "Parts were getting harder to find, and with these highly specialized aircraft operating all over the globe in critical missions like fire-fighting and heavy lifting, a long-term viable solution was needed.

"We are so pleased with the new AFCS system," Terhune added.

Dale Roberts, director of engineering at EAC, added: "We considered many options before making the decision to team with SBI. The results prove we made the right choice, and we are excited about the new system's low cost, long-term supportability and improved performance." Roberts also noted that the low-cost AFCS is easily adapted for certification on the CH54 and S61 aircraft.

Erickson Air-Crane, based in Portland, Ore., holds the type certificate for the S64, which it acquired from Sikorsky in 1992. The company currently supports 28 S64s worldwide, including 16 in their own fleet. EAC also builds S64s and adds to this fleet with each newly constructed aircraft.

SBI, based in Vancouver, Wash., specializes in small-quantity projects for aerospace customers who require complete turnkey solutions – from design and development through prototyping and final manufacturing. SBI can provide on-going product support, even for production quantities well under 1,000 units. Since 1993, SBI has been providing electronic and mechanical engineering design services to the aerospace industries, as well as other industries, to meet a wide variety of customer needs, offering engineering resources without long-term cost commitments. SBI has integrated rigorous development processes to assure meeting all customer product performance requirements, time-to-market goals, budget targets, quality mandates and customer expectations. This process includes documentation and deliverables to fully support subsequent regulatory agency approval.

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