Robert L. Lichten Award Procedures
(Revised June 2025)

1. Award Information

The **Robert L. Lichten Award** was established by the Vertical Flight Society (VFS) in 1975 to honor the memory of **Robert L. Lichten**, an exceptional rotary-wing engineer and the Society's 22nd President. Widely regarded as the "Pioneer of Tiltrotor Technology," Lichten was known for his passion and dedication, particularly in advancing early tilt-wing and tiltrotor concepts. His life and promising career were tragically cut short in an automobile accident.
This award aims to encourage VFS members who have not previously presented their work at a regional, national, or international event to begin doing so through local and regional VFS technical meetings.

Award Selection Process: Candidates for the Lichten Award are nominated by VFS Regional Vice Presidents and evaluated by a selection committee appointed by the VFS Technical Director. The committee is comprised of members of the VFS Technical Council, who assess the quality and originality of the candidate's work to determine the winner.

Award Benefits: The Lichten Award winner receives
- Up to **$**1,500 in travel funding to attend the VFS Annual Forum (from anywhere in the world).
- Hotel accommodations and complimentary Forum registration.
- A **$500 cash stipend** generously provided by **Bell** in memory of Robert L. Lichten.
- The **first runner-up** is also invited to present their work at the Annual Forum and will receive complimentary registration along with a certificate.

Note the following:
- *The winning Lichten paper is **not eligible** for the Alfred Gessow Best Paper Award, which is selected from the Forum papers.*
- *The Lichter runner-up paper **is eligible** for the Forum best paper award consideration.*

2. Award Objectives

Encourage Emerging Presenters: Promote the public presentation of technical work by VFS members who have not previously shared their research or developments at regional, national, or international events. Initial presentations at the local or regional level do not require a written paper. **However, the winner of each regional competition must submit a formal written paper to VFS Headquarters by February 28 for final judging**.

Foster Local and Regional Engagement: Increase member participation and strengthen engagement with VFS activities at the chapter and regional levels by providing a platform for technical exchange and professional recognition.

3. Eligibility for the Regional Lichten Competition

To participate in the Robert L. Lichten Award regional competition, candidates must meet the following criteria:

A. Membership and Prior Participation
- Must be a **current member** of the Vertical Flight Society (VFS).
- Must **not** have previously competed in the Lichten Award competition.

B. Age and Education
- There are no age or degree requirements for eligibility.

C. Chapter or Regional Participation
- Contestants should compete within the **chapter or region** where they hold membership.

D. Authorship

- A **single-authored** presentation and paper is preferred.
- Co-authored work may be eligible if the contestant has performed the *plurality of the technical and writing effort* (see Section F).

E. Prior Presentation Restrictions

- The contestant must **not** have previously presented at any **national or international** technical meeting, regardless of industry, discipline, or academic affiliation.
- This includes events hosted by associations such as (but not limited to):
    - AIAA, SAE, SAMPE, ASME, ERF, VFS Annual Forum, or VFS Technical Meetings.

Exceptions and Clarifications:

- Presentations at **local chapter meetings** or **local civic organizations** are permitted if they are **not** part of a larger dissemination effort (e.g., competition, national conference, or published presentation).
- Papers submitted to the **upcoming VFS Annual Forum** are eligible if all other eligibility criteria are met.
- Papers submitted to a **VFS Technical Meeting held after the upcoming Forum** are also eligible, provided all other requirements are satisfied.
- Presentations to the chapter/region must be **new and unpublished**.
- The technical presentation to the region/chapter should be at least 20 minutes in length.

F. Publication and Authorship Restrictions

- The contestant must **not** have previously served as the **principal author** of any paper published or presented at a national or international technical meeting or in an archival journal.

Definitions and Clarifications:

- A **principal author** is defined as the individual who performed the **majority of the technical and writing effort**.
- "Published" includes:
    - Papers or presentations at national/international technical meetings, conferences, or forums.
    - Papers publiahws in archival journals, even if not presented at a meeting.
- Co-authors of such works are eligible, **provided they were not the principal author and did not give the presentation**.
- The Lichten submission may cover a **subset of a larger team effort**, but the majority of technical content and writing must be the contestant's own work.

G. Paper Submission Requirement

- The **regional Lichten winner** must submit a **written paper by February 28** for final judging by the Lichten Award Selection Committee, chaired by the VFS Technical Director.
- The regional winner must submit a signed copy of the "*Lichten Eligibility Statement*".
- **Organizational Clearance:** All final regional winning papers must receive clearance from the author's organization or agency before being submitted to VFS Headquarters for review by the Lichten Award Selection Committee. It is the sole responsibility of the author to identify and obtain all necessary internal and external approvals required for public release, publication, and presentation.
- **Content Restrictions:** Papers and presentations submitted for the Lichten Award must not contain classified, export-controlled, proprietary, or otherwise restricted material. All submissions must be suitable for **unrestricted public dissemination**.

H. Questions of Eligibility

- Final eligibility decisions rest with the **VFS Technical Director**.
- Any questions should be directed to the **Technical Director**, with a copy to the **Technical Programs Director** at VFS Headquarters.

4. <u>Selection Process and Requirements for the Competition</u>

The **Regional Vice President** is responsible for selecting and nominating the region's candidate paper for the Robert L. Lichten Award, using the criteria outlined below. When submitting the nomination, the Regional Vice President must also confirm that:

- The written paper accurately reflects the material — including visuals — that were presented during the regional meeting or competition.
- A rigorous and fair selection process was followed in accordance with the standards of the VFS Forum.
- The candidate meets the eligibility criteria described in Section 3 and as evidenced by submitting a signed Eligibility Statement.

Nomination Guidelines

- Candidate Submission: Each region may nominate **one candidate paper**, which must be submitted to VFS Headquarters **no later than February 28** to be considered for the national-level competition.
- Selection Responsibility: Candidate papers must be nominated by the respective VFS Regional Vice President.
- Selection Standards: Each region's selection process must ensure that
    - The chosen candidate can deliver a **high-quality oral presentation**, meeting the professional standards of the VFS Annual Forum.
    - The candidate is **willing and able** to prepare a written paper based on the same material, suitable for possible publication in the *Journal of the American Helicopter Society*.
- Preferred Format: In-person competitions at regional meetings—with all participants present—are the preferred method for candidate selection.
- Alternative Formats: If in-person meetings are not feasible (e.g., due to geographic dispersion or travel restrictions), the Regional Vice President may organize an alternative solution, provided that:
    - The alternative format includes a **real-time, interactive presentation** with a **live audience**.
- Final Authority**:** The Lichten Award Selection Committee serves as the final authority on all matters related to eligibility, rules, and the selection process. All decisions made by the committee are final and binding.

Final Awad Selection Guidelines

The current **VFS Technical Director** shall appoint and chair the **Lichten Award Selection Committee**, which is responsible for evaluating the winning regional papers and selecting the overall award recipient.

Committee Composition

- The Selection Committee shall be comprised of members from the **VFS Technical Council**.
- To ensure balanced representation, the committee must include at least one member from each of the following sectors:
    - **Government**
    - **Industry**
    - **Academia**

Evaluation Criteria: Each submitted paper will be evaluated based on the following key factors:

- **Originality** of the work
- **Technical content** and depth
- **Relevance** of the contribution to vertical flight
- **Organization and clarity** of both the writing and presentation

Scoring and Ranking Process

- Each committee member will independently evaluate and rank the papers using the established **Individual Rating System** (see scoring chart below).
- Final rankings will be determined by simple numerical addition of the individual scores from all judges.
- The paper with the lowest total score (i.e., highest overall ranking) will be selected as the Lichten Award winner.

Ranking System: Reviewers will use the following table to assign numerical ratings.

- Any element that cannot be graded higher than a "C" should be zero.
- Ratings are to be integers only and the scale is linear between 1 and 5.
- Papers should be assessed to award high scores to those papers with truly outstanding factors as listed below:

Individual Ranking System

	Rating	Weighting Factor	Max
Originality/Creativity	0 to 5	6	30
Technical Content	0 to 5	6	30
Relevance of Contribution	0 to 5	4	20
Organization and Clarity	0 to 5	4	20
Total			100

5. Lichten Award Deadline Checklist

Regional & Chapter Milestones

- **September – October:** Issue **Call for Abstracts** at the Chapter and Regional level.
- **November – Early December:** Conduct **Chapter/Regional Competitions** to select regional winners.
- **February 28:** Submit **final regional nomination(s)** and **written papers** to **VFS Headquarters**.
- **April:** VFS Headquarters announces the Lichten Award winner and runner-up.

Important Note: *Because most Regional Competition participants will not have completed their written papers at the time of the competition, it is* ***strongly recommended*** *that all regional competitions be held* ***no later than early December****. This ensures the regional winner has adequate time to prepare and submit their paper by the* ***February 28*** *deadline.*

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