

## General Aviation Works for America

*Welcome to Avfuel's series that takes a look at some of the ways that aviation enhances the way we live.*

*This year Avfuel launched a new series of articles that focus on the "workhorses" of general aviation – those businesses often neglected by the news media that nevertheless support enormous industries and make critical contributions to the world, its peoples and its businesses.*

*We urge you to stay involved with this important issue and to help spread the word about the importance of general aviation in creating jobs, sustaining a strong economy, and creating opportunities for smaller communities.*



*Papillon Helicopter and crew on rescue mission. Photograph courtesy of Papillon Helicopter*

### PAPILLON HELICOPTER

**HQ based at the south rim of the Grand Canyon  
Grand Canyon West Airport (1G4)  
[www.grandcanyonresource.com](http://www.grandcanyonresource.com) • [www.papillon.com](http://www.papillon.com)**

#### **Fast facts:**

Since 1965 • 41 helicopter fleet • 40,000 flight hours a year

John Becker, owner of Papillon Helicopter, spoke to *The Advisor* about just a few of the various projects his general aviation company supports. These involve search and rescue, fire suppression and fire fighting, wildlife/game/fish studies and protection, power line patrol, military training, Grand Canyon National Park Services, Department of the Interior services and even aerial tours. This helicopter company can provide scheduled and on demand patrols and services for customers, making it a valuable asset for events and disasters that require a quick and efficient response.

For more information about Papillon's tour services, please visit [Papillon.com](http://Papillon.com). Tour locations include the Grand Canyon, Arizona, Las Vegas, Nevada and Boulder, Colorado.

### **POWER LINE PATROL**

Because aerial patrol is an effective means for monitoring broad swaths of land and remote locations, helicopters are ideal for power line patrols. To help keep power lines operational, Becker's helicopters fly along in formation with a given power pole, checking for damage, trees that might eventually pose a problem, bird nests or insulation damage. Aerial patrol of power lines prevents blackouts and energy shortages.

### **MILITARY TRAINING**

Papillon has year-round contracts with the Department of Defense (DOD) to assist with exciting desert warfare simulations at Ft. Irwin in California. Each time a mock battle occurs, every aspect of it is recorded and taped by equipment mounted on a series of towers. To ensure these towers are fully operational, the military contracts Papillon's helicopters and pilots to run support missions.

### **GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK**

National Parks, especially those as enormous as the Grand Canyon, require a great deal of support during the high season, says Becker. Papillon Helicopters assists with frequent search and rescue missions, fire suppression and anything else the national park requires. The aircraft designated for this purpose, typically an MD 900 and/or a Bell 407, is based at the Grand Canyon's helicopter base.



*Papillon Helicopter and crew on rescue mission. Photograph courtesy of Papillon Helicopter*

## ANIMAL RESCUE

Water shortages frequently threaten the well-being of Arizona's beautiful Big Horn Sheep. In response to very severe drought emergencies, Papillon can assist the local support agencies in bringing



*Zion Canyon. Photograph courtesy of Papillon Helicopter*  
water from a water source such as the Arizona Canal, or a transport truck, to the sheep's habitat. The Bell 206 helicopter uses a 144 gallon "Bambi bucket" - a collapsible bucket also used in fire fighting operations - for this purpose. The sheep live at high density altitudes that are hot and windy, an extra complication for helicopter operators to face.

## ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

This agency supports wildlife conservation efforts and community education, while conducting studies and taking actions to help keep the environment safe for wildlife today and in the future. Papillon flies over 500 hours every year for this agency alone, helping them conduct surveys, game capture and other tasks.

## U.S. FOREST SERVICE / INTERAGENCY FIRE SUPPRESSION

Running fire missions for a variety of agencies all over the country, Papillon's fire suppression work varies between controlled burns and initial attack. Controlled burns are when the agency ignites a fire deliberately in order to rid the area of highly combustible underbrush

to prevent future fires from lightening storms and accidents. These burns protect the forest itself long term, and also help prevent property damage and the loss of human life. It is only done when weather and climate conditions and dryness conditions are appropriate to allow the burn to be extinguished quickly and easily.

When a particular forest is known to burn periodically, agencies will contract a Papillon helicopter and base it nearby as an "initial attack" helicopter. When a lightening storm occurs, the pre-positioned helicopter patrols the forest. Should the forest catch fire and ignite, the helicopter can call for back-up and also immediately drops retardant.



*A Papillon helicopter in action. Photograph courtesy of Papillon Helicopter*

"You are utilizing the equipment at its maximum capability at all times, so it's challenging," says Becker, who employs over 95 pilots during the busy summer months.

*For more Avfuel "General Aviation Works" articles including aero medical transport, fire suppression, national security and cargo transport, see the Spring 2009 AVTRIP Newsletter and the Summer 2009 Avfuel Contract Fuel Newsletter. Both newsletters are available online now at [www.avfuel.com](http://www.avfuel.com), in the Avfuel News & Media section.*

***Would you like to share the story of how your FBO works for America? Please contact our writer, Leia Menlove at [imenlove@avfuel.com](mailto:imenlove@avfuel.com) to tell us more.***