

FBO NEWS

Cutter celebrates 80 years in aviation business

By Jim Veihdeffer



Jim Veihdeffer photo

Pres Will Cutter (L) sits on a custom-built Honda VTX 1300C-based motorcycle which commemorates the company's 80th year in business as Chairman Bill Cutter looks on. A Mar 11 event at the company's new hangar at PHX helped serve as a platform to look toward the next 80 years.

Around 75 people attended a Mar 11 event commemorating the 80th anniversary of Cutter Aviation, the PHX (Sky Harbor, Phoenix AZ)-based FBO and aircraft services provider. At the start of the celebration, visitors heard a loud roar echoing through Cutter's new

hangar at the south end of PHX—the sound of a custom Honda VTX 1300C motorcycle driven by artist/builder Al Bierman.

Dubbed "The Aviator," the motorcycle is a tribute to Cutter's heritage and portrays significant elements of its history. The significance of the Honda-built cycle was not incidental. Although known as a Hawker Beechcraft, Piper and Socata facility, Cutter recently signed on as a US sales and service dealer for the HondaJet, due out in 2010.

Started in 1928 in Albuquerque NM, Cutter has managed to sustain and grow its operations—through the Great Depression and two world wars—into what is among the oldest family-owned, continuously operated aviation businesses in the US.

From its beginnings as a single-location aircraft service company, Cutter is now an aviation enterprise, offering a full range of services including fuel, new and pre-owned aircraft sales, maintenance, charter, aircraft management and travel services at eight locations throughout the southwestern US.

"We're the oldest Phillips dealer, the oldest Beechcraft dealer and the oldest tenant at both PHX and ABQ (Sunport, Albuquerque NM)," says Pres Will Cutter, grandson of founder William P Cutter. "But, as we head into our next 80 years, and with Hawker Beechcraft going factory-direct, we'll still be growing and going. HondaJet is the future."

Chairman Bill Cutter, son of the founder, has his eyes set squarely on the 21st century—the company's future could include looking at additional noncompeting corporate or light jet opportunities like the HondaJet program just inked.

"Eighty years is fine, but it's all about the future," he says. "My dad used to say, 'Do the right thing and do things right. Which comes first doesn't matter.' Considering we started out here in a 50-by-50-foot wooden hangar, I'd say it's a good indication that we're doing something right."