Delaware State Police Announces Arrival of New Bell 429 Global Ranger Helicopters

The Delaware State Police (DSP) Aviation Section is proud to announce the acquisition of two state-of-the-art Bell 429 Global Ranger helicopters. These cutting-edge aircraft, designed to save lives and combat crime, touched down in Delaware on December 3, 2024, following a nearly year-long fabrication process in Mirabel, Quebec, Canada, and Piney Flats, Tennessee.

After years of operating with a reduced fleet of three helicopters, the decision was made to increase the fleet to four. One of the existing aircraft was traded in to facilitate this upgrade as part of the acquisition process. This strategic move ensured the modernization of the fleet without compromising operational readiness. Operating with only three helicopters had previously led to an accelerated maintenance schedule, limited training opportunities, and reduced redundancy during mechanical issues.

In keeping with Delaware's tradition of valuing unique identifiers, such as low-digit license plates, the tail numbers of these new helicopters– "N2SP" and "N71SP"–pay homage to the proud history of DSP aircraft.

The Bell 429 helicopters come equipped with numerous advancements in aviation technology. These include modern digital gauges, updated monitors, and an enhanced camera system. Notably, these are the first law enforcement Bell 429 helicopters to feature a rear-view camera, providing pilots with an improved field of view during takeoff and landing. Additionally, the aircraft boasts a lightweight interior design, enhancing accessibility and reducing overall weight.

The DSP Aviation Section has flown 526 patients to area trauma centers in 2024, a number expected to grow as DSP paramedics prepare to carry and administer whole blood to critically ill patients. To support this initiative, the new helicopters are equipped with blood warmers for lifesaving transfusions. They also feature upgraded medical equipment, including Zoll Heart Monitors, advanced airway management devices, ventilators, and infusion pumps.

Captain Jeff Whitmarsh, Aviation Commander, remarked, “These new aircraft represent a significant leap forward in our mission to serve and protect the people of Delaware. I have no doubt that they will save lives from their very first mission. Our highly trained crews are ready to support law enforcement, fire personnel, ground medics, and the general public. These helicopters enhance our capacity, efficiency, and capability to serve the First State from above.”