

Forest Helicopters

Forest Helicopters services customers in Northwestern Ontario with a main base located in Kenora, a sub base in Pickle Lake and summer operations in the Kivalliq region of Nunavut, where it has a joint-venture partnership with a local Inuit business in Baker Lake.

Founder, Bart Stevenson, spent 23 years flying for other operators in northern Canada before he started Forest Helicopters in April 1997.

The company began its transition to an all-Airbus Helicopters fleet in the year 2000 with the purchase of an AS350 and today is the proud operator of eight AS350 series aircraft.

“As our customers were introduced to the features of the AS350, the demand for the aircraft increased,” says Stevenson. “Our customers were impressed with everything including speed, smooth ride, cargo space, general payload and endurance. We began adding additional AS350 aircraft to the fleet and placed orders with Airbus in Fort Erie.”

“Each of our aircraft is equipped with many of the options available through Airbus Helicopters. Some of these items include cargo pods “squirrel cheeks”, full-visibility pilot side windows, enlarged sling windows and boarding steps.”

“The squirrel cheeks installed on each side of our AS350 helicopters almost double the original available side cargo space. We have the ability to fill 15 cubic feet of space on each side and carry anywhere from 386 – 430 pounds per side. Having this superior cargo handling space eliminates carrying cargo in the cabin area.”

“In addition to supplying well designed optional equipment, Airbus Helicopters Canada has provided Forest with airframe upgrade services. This allows us to increase the value and performance of our older aircraft.”

The AS350 AStar family is a proven work horse and the Forest fleet can be found moving diamond drills in support of the mineral exploration industry in Canada.

“Recently much of our exploration support services have been provided through our Baker Lake, Nunavut partnership - Forest North Aviation and Logistics,” says Stevenson.

“Exploration companies with projects in Nunavut use the helicopter primarily for the moving drill units from one location to the next. Tighter environmental regulations have been introduced to protect the tundra which now restrict the old practice of dragging the drills over the ground. During a helicopter move, we can lift an external load of up to 2000 pounds utilizing a 100 foot synthetic long line complete with a remote hook.”

Forest's talented crews can dismantle the complete drill, move it to a new location, reassemble it and have it running again in a short time.

In addition to supporting mineral exploration projects across Canada, other Forest Helicopter's customers include the Provincial and Federal ministries, Hydro One, Bell Canada and Ontario Power Generation.

"The Forest fleet continues to fulfill the needs of our customers and Airbus Helicopters provides us with a wide range of products and services to help accomplish this mission," says Stevenson. "We are happy to be part of the Airbus family."