

Media Release  
Kerikeri, Tuesday 10 May 2011



## Chopper supporters again fly high

After a postponement due to appalling weather conditions, 25 or so keen Far North helicopter joy-riders took to the sky in the Electricity Rescue Helicopter last Sunday. They won their rides in an incentive prize draw (for having donated \$5 or more) offered as part of the 2010 Electricity Rescue Helicopter Appeal.

The Appeal, promoted during October/November last year in a high-profile advertising campaign funded by Joint Sponsors, Top Energy and neighbouring lines company, Northpower and the Northland Emergency Services Trust (NEST), raised a total of \$264,360, which included the matching, dollar-for-dollar of all public donations by Top Energy and Northpower. The total funds (without any deductions made for campaign or administration charges) went to NEST to help offset the rescue helicopter's standing costs, which include pilot's wages, rescue crew training, insurance and interest on loans.

The machine, a Sikorsky S-76A, was flown up from its Whangarei base to the Bay of Islands Aero Club especially for the occasion. It cruises at 155kts (almost 300km/h), burns Jet A1 fuel at 330ltrs/hour and has a range up to 3hours 10 minutes normal flying time.

With co-operating weather and excellent visibility a little later in the day, the lucky donors were treated to sight-seeing trips as far out as the *Hole in the Rock*. Some of the 'locals' were especially thrilled with their rides, as they got to see their favourite fishing spots from an altogether different vantage point. And in case proof that advancing years is no barrier to having fun was needed, senior joy-rider, Mrs Eva Fell of Mitimiti thoroughly enjoyed her ride, despite her husband electing to stay firmly on the ground. Mr Fell apparently flew Tiger Moths in 1945 and felt he'd had enough flying in his lifetime - besides which he admitted, he was scared of heights!

According to Top Energy CEO, Russell Shaw, the free helicopter rides have been a regular feature of the annual Appeals and an excellent opportunity for these lucky winners to get up close and personal with the rescue service they so generously support. "We've enjoyed a sponsorship

arrangement with NEST and the Electricity Rescue Helicopter since 1992. We're delighted to continue our support for the rescue chopper because it provides a vital 24/7 emergency response to many of our more geographically isolated Far North communities", he said.

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PIC: Lucky Electricity Rescue Helicopter Appeal supporters, with Mrs Eva Fell, 2<sup>nd</sup> from left.