

SKY'S THE LIMIT

New resident sees bright future for unmanned aviation industry

Blackstone resident Jay Willmott was recently elected Vice President of the Virginia Aviation Council during that group's quarterly meeting of its Board of Directors held at the Richmond Jet Center.

Willmott told the *Courier-Record*, "I was honored to be selected" and said "this is an indication of the growth and increasing acceptance of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS, or drones) by the public, as well as the general aviation community."

The Virginia Aviation Council, a non-profit organization, plans and runs the Virginia Festival of Flight each year and is also active in aviation workforce development efforts.

Willmott is President of Fairfax-based Nexutech LLC, a group of unmanned systems consultants, who recently moved to Blackstone, where he previously managed the successful turnaround of UAV Pro.

"I am enthusiastic about the continued growth of unmanned technologies, and this industry's positive impact in southern Virginia," he said. "Growth will continue if we're able to effectively engage leaders in Richmond to be attentive to the good things happening here and get them to actively support our area."

Last August, Willmott was named "Virginia Aviation Person of 2016" by the Virginia Department of Aviation (DOAV), in recognition of his efforts to develop the



JAY WILLMOTT
Aviation Council VP

unmanned aviation industry in Virginia.

In making that award, DOAV noted his "dedication to building state and local STEM education activities."

Willmott said, "I've learned from national leaders in workforce development that career guidance must begin well before high school and college, as many kids establish career interests during middle school."

He added, "Aviation jobs don't necessarily mean sitting in the cockpit. There are many good-paying career opportunities for young men and women who are interested in aircraft maintenance, or other ground-based roles, many of which don't require a four-year degree. Kids need to know anything is achievable."

Willmott will join other aviation business proponents in Richmond tomorrow (Thursday, Feb. 2nd) to take part in the aero industry's annual "Aerospace Day" activities, which educate lawmakers as to the importance of aviation.