

“Work Hard ... and Don’t Quit”

Helicopter Foundation International (HFI) scholarship recipient Matthew Bettmeng can’t remember a time he wasn’t passionate about aviation. His parents joke that he was born with the gene!

Bettmeng grew up attending as many air shows and aviation demonstrations as he could. When he moved from South Dakota to Kansas in 2009, he had the opportunity to meet Johnny Rowlands, the helicopter pilot and traffic reporter for KMBC-TV in Kansas City and owner of KC Copters in Olathe, Kansas.

At only 16 years old, Bettmeng asked Rowlands to train him to be a helicopter pilot. To pay for the training he needed to receive his private rating, Bettmeng mowed 35 lawns a week. He



A recent high school graduate who will attend Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in the fall, Matthew Bettmeng already holds private and commercial helicopter ratings.



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HFI offers up to 19 scholarships each year to support students studying to become part of tomorrow's vertical aviation industry. Applications for 2017 scholarships will open in June at helicopterfoundation.org/scholarships.

currently has more than 200 hours of flight training through KC Copters.

In order to acquire his commercial rating, Bettmeng applied for and received a 2016 HFI Commercial Helicopter Rating Scholarship. He now holds his private and commercial helicopter pilot certificates and is working to complete his instrument rating, with a target completion date of August 2016.

Following his high school graduation this May, Bettmeng will attend Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Prescott, Arizona, to pursue a degree in aeronautical science. He plans to go on to get his master's in business management with an emphasis in aviation.

During his time in college, Bettmeng will continue his flight training. His goal is to obtain his certificated flight instructor (CFI) rating by December 2016 and his CFI – Instrument certificate by May 2017. In addition, he plans to incorporate high-altitude flight training.

Ultimately, Bettmeng plans to become a heli-ski/utility pilot in the mountains. "It would be amazing to fly utility work in the summers and fly heli-ski in the winters," he says. "Someday, I also hope to include a career flying high-altitude medevac in Colorado."


Bettmeng had the opportunity to attend HAI HELI-EXPO 2016 in Louisville, Kentucky. "I never dreamed that I would have the chance to meet such an amazing group of mentors," he says after attending the HFI mentoring panels held March 1.

Bettmeng also attended two HAI Professional Education courses and sat in on some of the Rotor Safety Challenge sessions offered and says he is "indebted to HAI for making him a better and safer pilot."

Asked what advice he has for those considering a career in aviation, Bettmeng says, "Work hard ... and

don't give up! I have worked harder than I ever thought possible to be able to accomplish what I have at my age." He credits his family's support and

finding a mentor like Johnny Rowlands with keeping him focused on his goals.

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