

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For more information:

Bob Brock

785.296.2553

KDOT demonstrates disaster response using drones

Agency continues efforts in national UAS program called BEYOND

The Kansas Department of Transportation's Division of Aviation completed a field exercise recently in Rossville to demonstrate the capabilities of drones being used for infrastructure inspections and disaster response.

Bridge inspectors, public safety officials, universities and UAS manufacturers worked side-by-side with KDOT team members on this exercise. The Capabilities Exercise, or CAPEX, showed how drones can –

- save time and money on transportation infrastructure inspections;
- allow state agencies to examine disaster sites in emergency response situations;
- and expand economic opportunities through transportation using innovative technologies.

“Safety is our top priority and we seek every opportunity to employ better transportation solutions for citizens across our state,” said Kansas Transportation Secretary Julie Lorenz.

In October 2017, KDOT was selected as one of nine participants in the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Integration Pilot Program, a three-year program that concluded Oct. 25.

“KDOT was an important partner in the first UAS IPP,” said U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran. “I look forward to witnessing the future accomplishments of our state in this new program and will continue advocating at the federal level on their behalf.”

The FAA decided to continue the partnerships to tackle remaining UAS integration challenges and further drone research with the BEYOND program. KDOT is one of eight participants to continue in the research effort.

The drone demonstration in Rossville was one of the first events to take place as part of BEYOND, “which will continue to advance the safe integration of drones into our national air space,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao.

“We appreciate Secretary Chao’s confidence in our team and our exercise last week demonstrates our enthusiasm for achieving the goals of this program,” said Bob Brock, KDOT Director of Aviation.

“We are highly enthused to partner with Kansas as they consistently demonstrate strong leadership in aviation,” said Joe Miniace, Federal Aviation Administration Regional Administrator.

There are 44 state agency, university and technology partners have been selected to join the KDOT team in their efforts in the BEYOND program.

Current members of the KDOT Beyond team include:

Aerion Supersonic
AeroVironment
AgEagle
Airmap
Alaris
Alynix/GBA
ATT FirstNet
Black and Veatch
Evergy
FlightSafety International
Flytrex
Fortem Tech
Garmin International
Garver
Iris Automation
Kansas Board of Regents
Kansas Bureau of Investigation
Kansas Farm Bureau
Kansas Department of Agriculture
Kansas Department of Commerce
Kansas Department of Education
Kansas Department of Transportation
Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks
Kansas Highway Patrol
Kansas Sheriff's Association
Kansas State University
Kittyhawk
Lemasters Group
MediGo
MissionGo
Phase One
Pitsco Education
Pulse Aero
ResilienX
Silent Falcon
Skydio
Textron

UAV Factory
University of Kansas
UPS Flight Forward
Verizon
Vigilent Inc
Wichita State University
Zing

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