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Kansas leads the nation with UAS flight

The first beyond the line of sight Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) flight in Kansas was flown on Monday north of the town of Gypsum in a joint effort by the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) and more than 30 university and corporate partners. This was also the second flight in the nation to take place under the U.S. DOT's UAS Integration Pilot Program (IPP).

The first flight was scheduled to take place today, however, with rain and storms predicted, it was conducted yesterday. Weather did allow today's flight to also take place at the news conference, and Kansas State University Polytechnic took the lead on both flights. More flights will continue this week with AirMap, Pulse Aerospace and Iris Automation.

"We're proud of what we're doing in Kansas to create new jobs, improve flight safety and advance agriculture," said Bob Brock, KDOT Director of Aviation and UAS. "Our flights mark the beginning of a new generation of Kansas innovation."

KDOT was selected in May as one of only 10 organizations in the nation to lead the UAS IPP, an initiative aimed at shaping the future of drones. The flights this week, and future flights, will test aircraft capability and reliability for continued beyond line of sight operations while collecting data to expand advanced UAS operations nationwide.

Over the next two years, various Kansas IPP team partners will conduct tests over transmission lines, farms, roads and other infrastructure well clear of Kansas citizens. This program will also assist the U.S. DOT and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in

shaping new rules to expand safe UAS integration into the National Airspace System and create new opportunities for the state and UAS industry.

“Kansas has been a valuable aviation partner for decades and the launch of the IPP is another opportunity for us to work with all of the professionals here in Kansas as we take the next steps that will pave the way toward full integration of unmanned aircraft into the national airspace,” said Dennis King, FAA Program Manager for Kansas UAS IPP.

The Kansas IPP team’s partners will focus on integrating UAS operations into Kansas industries involved in infrastructure inspection and precision agriculture. Partnerships with the FAA and Kansas IPP team members will continue to foster expansion of UAS operations for the state and the nation.

More information about the FAA UAS IPP can be found at:

https://www.faa.gov/uas/programs_partnerships/uas_integration_pilot_program/

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