

MEDIA RELEASE

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NUAIR and New York UAS Test Site Unlock 35 Miles of Beyond Visual Line of Sight Drone Operations

NUAIR and New York UAS Test Site receive authority to fly drones 35 miles beyond visual line of sight within New York's 50-mile drone corridor

(SYRACUSE, NEW YORK) – NUAIR and the New York UAS Test Site have received authority from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to fly unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), commonly referred to as drones, beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) across 35 miles of airspace within New York's 50-mile Drone Corridor. Current regulations require drone operators to always have a pair of eyes on the drone, limiting the ability to fly long distances. The ability to safely fly BVLOS is the key to unlocking the full potential and economic advantage of routine commercial drone operations like medical and package deliveries.

In 2019, NUAIR and the Test Site received their first BVLOS authority for an eight-by-four mile stretch of airspace from the New York UAS Test Site, at Griffiss International Airport, south to the State Preparedness Training Center in Oriskany. This new airspace authority extends west of Griffiss towards Oneida Lake increasing their overall BVLOS airspace to 35 miles.

“Oneida County’s Test Site at Griffiss International Airport has long established itself as an elite hub for all things UAS,” said Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente Jr. “The one-of-a-kind testing, research and development that occurs here is elevating the entire industry. This latest FAA authorization will allow our 50-mile drone corridor to push the limits of what is possible yet again, and we look forward to the new advancements that will result.”

“We have a long track record of safe UAS test flights and real-life implementation, including BVLOS operations,” said NUAIR chief of operations Tony Basile. “This new BVLOS airspace authorization will allow us to test more advanced, long-range flights and help us prove BVLOS operations can be done safely – the key component in realizing the true economic advantage of commercial drone operations.”

NUAIR will utilize the ground-based surveillance systems (GBSS) installed throughout the corridor to monitor air traffic and detect intruder aircraft for BVLOS operations that are taking place at or below 400 feet. Visual observers may also be deployed during BVLOS operations to assure safety of operations.

Empire State Development acting commissioner and president & CEO-designate Hope Knight said, “Supporting innovative technology that is creating the jobs of tomorrow is at the heart of what ESD and the New York State Regional Economic Development Councils are designed to do. By continuing to support the growing UAS industry in Central New York and the Mohawk Valley, we are ensuring its continued development in New York State, securing our place as a global leader in this emerging business.”

NUAIR has conducted over 3,800 UAS test flights at the New York UAS Test Site, within New York's 50-mile Drone Corridor, equating to more than 950 flight hours since operations began in 2014. This new authorization will help advance the reality of routine commercial drone operations and continue to draw companies from across the globe to Central New York and the Mohawk Valley regions.

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About NUAIR

NUAIR (Northeast UAS Airspace Integration Research Alliance, Inc.) is a New York-based nonprofit with a mission to safely integrate unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) into the national airspace, enabling scalable, economically viable commercial drone operations. NUAIR manages operations of the FAA-designated New York UAS Test Site at Griffiss International Airport, Rome, NY on behalf of Oneida County and is responsible for the advancement of New York's 50-mile UAS Corridor between Rome and Syracuse, NY. <https://nuair.org>