Reno Partnership Aims to Equip Fire Department with Drones to Conduct Life-Saving River Search and Rescue Operations

Iris Automation conducts live demonstration flights of air safety solution for Reno Fire Department under FAA's Unmanned Aircraft Systems Integration Pilot Program

RENO, NEVADA (October 23, 2020) – Under the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Integration Pilot Program (IPP), earlier this week Iris Automation conducted a live drone flight demonstration for the City of Reno Fire Department of its Casia onboard Detect-and-Avoid (DAA) collision avoidance system, which enables safe beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) drone operations.

The demonstration took place in Nevada over the Carson River at Fort Churchill State Historic Park, using a drone integrated with Casia to illustrate how this cutting-edge technology will be used to provide automated situational awareness for drones and their pilots. Technologies like onboard DAA are critical to ensuring that drones are safely integrated into the national airspace and able to avoid collisions with other manned aircraft.

The River Search and Rescue program will test the safety and capability of using drones during river rescue missions in an effort to improve response times and reduce exposure of both first responders and victims to dangerous conditions during river rescue operations.

"Through this CONOP, we aim to implement rescue operations supported by drone technology within the Truckee River region in the near future," Reno Fire Chief Dave Cochran said. "Water exposure, especially in moving-water incidents, is extremely dynamic and dangerous for victims and first responders. The use of drones will increase our safety and increase our efficiency. I'm thrilled that we're looking for an innovative approach to help improve our river response."

Ensuring a safe community and a well-maintained public infrastructure is a strategic priority for the City of Reno. This program has the potential to increase the survival rate of victims during river rescue operations while helping to develop safe practices for drone usage throughout the United States.

In May 2018, the City of Reno was selected by the United States Department of Transportation (DOT) as one of nine state, local and tribal governments to participate in the FAA UAS IPP. The UAS IPP is working with the nine public-private partnerships to implement and study specific drone applications across the United States in an effort to advance the safe integration of drones into the nation's airspace.

"The City of Reno has been a leader in the UAS community, and this demonstration is another example of the application of these technologies for public benefit," said Jon Damush, CEO of Iris Automation. "Our priority at Iris is the safe integration of UAS into the airspace, and we are excited to continue our partnership with the City of Reno and the FAA to extend these capabilities to the Fire Department and First Responders."

While the FAA's UAS IPP is slated to conclude operations on October 24, the partnership will continue to progress to further advance the River Search and Rescue Program. Initial BVLOS flight operations will take place at the Carson River location with future testing to be conducted over the Truckee River as soon as next year.

Link to graphics and video:

Reno IPP Media Assets

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About the City of Reno, Nevada:
The City of Reno government's mission is creating a community that people are proud to call home. In order to achieve that purpose, the Reno City Council has established six Tier 1 priorities and seven Tier 2 priorities. To learn more about the City of Reno, visit Reno.gov or call 775-334-INFO (4636).

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About Iris Automation:
Iris Automation is a safety avionics technology company pioneering Detect-and-Avoid (DAA) systems and aviation policy services that enable customers to build scalable Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) operations for commercial drones; operations unlocking the potential of countless industries. Iris' DAA system runs entirely onboard Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), allowing them to fly safely at long distances and without human intervention. We work closely with civil aviation authorities globally as they implement regulatory frameworks ensuring BVLOS is conducted safely, partnering on multiple FAA UAS Integration Pilot Programs, NASA's Unmanned Traffic Management program and Transport Canada's BVLOS Technology Demonstration Program. To learn more, visit irisonboard.com.

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