

# VIPC sponsors Droneresponders National Conference in Williamsburg

*VIPC Public Safety Innovation Center (PSIC) Director Chris Sadler receives Public Safety UAS Leadership Award.*

WILLIAMSBURG , VIRGINIA, UNITED STATES, March 20, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation \(VIPC\)](https://www.vipc.com/) sponsored the [Droneresponders](https://www.droneresponders.org/) National Conference that took place this week at Busch Gardens in Williamsburg. Nearly 300 public safety officials participated in the sold-out event, which focused on the use of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) technology to support law enforcement, fire services and other emergency response operations. Also, Chris Sadler, the director of the VIPC Public Safety Innovation Center (PSIC), was awarded the David King Public Safety UAS Leadership Award.

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We're pleased Droneresponders hosts this important conference in Virginia and that our state continues to be a national leader of drone technology for public safety.”

*Tracy Tynan, Director of the Virginia Unmanned Systems Center at VIPC*



Droneresponders is a nonprofit Drones for Good™ program created by AIRT to help first responders, emergency managers, and search and rescue specialists learn, train, and test UAS to maximize the use of drones for public safety operations. The program is led by Charles Werner, the retired chief of the Charlottesville Fire Department.

“VIPC has supported Chief Werner and Droneresponders since the program’s inception and continues to work closely with the organization through our Public Safety Innovation Center (PSIC),” Bob Stolle, the President and CEO of VIPC, said. “Droneresponders has helped

thousands of public safety agencies by providing guidance and recommendations, starting with selecting and procuring drones to using them to increase the speed and effectiveness of emergency responses.”

Since it was started in 2019, Droneresponders has become the premier source of public safety UAS research and knowledge. It provides public safety agencies around the world with research and insights about UAS for emergency response, standardized training and certification, shared knowledge and education, and guidance on establishing professional and proficient UAS operations.



DroneResponders Founder and President Charles Werner and VIPC President and CEO Bob Stolle present the David King Public Safety UAS Leadership Award to Chris Sadler, Director of the Virginia Public Safety Innovation Center at VIPC.

Abigail Smith, the deputy executive director of the UAS Integration Office at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), delivered the keynote address at the conference. She announced her promotion to executive director of UAS Security at the FAA. In her new role, she will be working closely with stakeholders to develop rulemaking for safe and secure UAS operations in the national airspace system.

Sadler was presented with the King Award in recognition of his support of public safety UAS. He was an early adopter of UAS while deputy chief of the York County Fire and Life Safety in Virginia, where he served for 35 years before joining VIPC full time earlier this year. Sadler has helped hundreds of public safety agencies across the country by assisting them with applications for FAA waivers to enable the use of UAS for specific emergency operations in their communities. He currently is advising the public safety community on new technologies, including UAS detection systems. The award is named for the late David King, who was among the first to organize a public safety UAS conference, which took place at his farm in Crozet.

The Droneresponders conference included sessions on drone technology and best practices, with remarks by officials from NASA, NIST and MITRE. There was a panel discussion on the national expansion of the Flight Information System (FIX), which was developed with support from VIPC to inform drone pilots of ground incidents, infrastructure and regulations that may affect their operations. D.J. Smith, an advisor to VIPC’s PSIC, also moderated a panel on counter UAS technology and policy with representatives from law enforcement, industry academia and the FAA.

“UAS technology is ideal for public safety because drone flights heighten situational awareness, whether to help law enforcement assess traffic accident scenes or firefighters find the quickest and safest way to extinguish a fire,” Tracy Tynan, director of the Virginia Unmanned Systems Center at VIPC said. “We’re pleased DroneResponders hosts this important conference in Virginia and that our state continues to be a national leader of drone technology for public safety.”

About Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation (VIPC)

VIPC: Connecting innovators with opportunities. As the nonprofit operations arm of the Virginia Innovation Partnership Authority (VIPA), VIPC is the commercialization and seed stage economic development driver in the Commonwealth that leads funding, infrastructure, and policy initiatives to support Virginia's innovators, entrepreneurs, startups, and market development strategies. VIPC collaborates with local, regional, state, and federal partners to support the expansion and diversification of Virginia's economy.

Programs include: Virginia Venture Partners (VVP) | VVP Fund of Funds (SSBCI) | Virginia Founders Fund (VFF) | Commonwealth Commercialization Fund (CCF) | Petersburg Founders Fund (PFF) | Smart Communities | The Virginia Smart Community Testbed | The Virginia Unmanned Systems Center | Virginia Advanced Air Mobility Alliance (VAAMA) | The Public Safety Innovation Center | Entrepreneurial Ecosystems | Regional Innovation Fund (RIF) | Federal Funding Assistance Program (FFAP) for SBIR & STTR | University Partnerships | Startup Company Mentoring & Engagement. For more information, please visit [www.VirginiaIPC.org](http://www.VirginiaIPC.org). Follow VIPC on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

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