

NARTP SIGNS COOPERATIVE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT WITH USTRANSCOM, USAF AIR MOBILITY COMMAND, AND ACEA

Agreement opens test corridor stretching from Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst to Dover AFB, linking to New Jersey's Aviation Innovation Hub in Atlantic County

EGG HARBOR TOWNSHIP, NEW JERSEY, UNITED STATES, June 2, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- An



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*NARTP Board Chairman Mark
Loeben*

agreement to create a test and evaluation corridor for the development of Uncrewed Aerial Systems (UAS) and automated Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) technologies was recently signed by officials representing U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM), Air Mobility Command (AMC), the National Aerospace Research & Technology Park (NARTP), and the Atlantic County Economic Alliance (ACEA).

"This agreement is a significant accomplishment and will

demonstrate the NARTP's ability to facilitate aviation research," said NARTP Board Chairman Mark Loeben, a retired Air Force major general and current American Airlines captain.

"USTRANSCOM and AMC are major players in aviation. Their interest in working with the NARTP helps to advance both the development of the NARTP and the emerging aviation industry in New Jersey's Atlantic County."

Under the terms of the Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA), the parties will cooperatively develop a prototype dual-use U.S. East Coast test and evaluation corridor for the demonstration, development, and evaluation of military, commercial, academic, and Federal Government UAS and AAM technologies with future application to strategic airlift capabilities of the U.S. Air Force.

UASs are often referred to as drones, while AAM involves the use of electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft to move people and cargo between places not easily served by other modes of transportation. Both UAS and AAM technologies are being developed rapidly by government and military agencies and private industry and the testing corridor will help to safely

integrate them into the national airspace.

The availability of the UAS/AAM evaluation corridor between Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst (JBMDL) in New Jersey and Dover AFB in Delaware allows AMC and USTRANSCOM to rapidly assess technical and operational concepts for UAS and AAM, and to develop measures of value in operational scenarios. What makes the designated airspace a “dual use” corridor is that the CRADA facilitates the launching and landing of civilian craft from non-DOD sites within the corridor, including the NARTP. Many of the tests and experiments envisioned would only be possible with a dedicated corridor.

Howard J. Kyle, NARTP President, thanked all the parties for their efforts in developing the CRADA. “The CRADA is an outcome of the NARTP’s work with AMC and FAA on the Airfield Autonomy Initiative (AAI) that involves the testing and demonstration of automated lawn mowing, foreign object debris sweeping, and perimeter patrol in both military and civilian airfield environments.” In early 2023 the NARTP was awarded a \$2.249 million congressionally directed spending request to advance AAI.

The ACEA, the lead agency for economic development in Atlantic County, is providing funding for portions of implementing the CRADA using U.S. Economic Development Administration (USEDA) planning grant funds. According to Lauren Moore, President of the ACEA, “The CRADA is a significant step forward in the evolution of an Aviation Research Triangle in New Jersey that links JBMDL, the Aviation Innovation Hub in Atlantic County, and the UAS work being done in Cape May County. Opening the airspace for military and civilian UAS/AAM research will create significant economic development opportunities that will benefit the entire state of New Jersey.”

USTRANSCOM is one of the 11 unified commands of the U.S. Department of Defense. In both times of peace and war, USTRANSCOM’s role is to provide the DOD with air, land, and sea transportation. USTRANSCOM was founded in 1987 and is based at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois.

AMC is a major command of the U.S. Air Force and the air component to USTRANSCOM, also headquartered at Scott. It provides unrivaled airlift, air refueling, aeromedical evacuation, global air mobility support, and Global Mobility Mission Command to project, connect, maneuver, and sustain the Joint Force to achieve national objectives.

The NARTP is a key element of New Jersey’s only state-recognized Aviation Innovation Hub, located in Egg Harbor Township, which links the park to the FAA’s William J. Hughes Technical Center, and Atlantic City International Airport (ACY), a Smart Airport Testbed. Having the Aviation Innovation Hub included within the test and evaluation corridor for UAS and AAM is critical since the FAA Tech Center is ground zero for issues concerning integration of UAS/AAM into the national airspace.

The NARTP is catalyzing innovation with an ecosystem of partnerships and harnessing the power of collaboration, facilitating research and development, innovation, and commercialization of emerging aviation technologies. NARTP is located on a 58-acre parcel adjoining the Federal Aviation Administration William J. Hughes Technical Center, an internationally recognized facility dedicated to research, development, and sustainment of the National Airspace System, and the Atlantic City International Airport, a designated Smart Airport Research Testbed Facility. NARTP tenants are performing leading research in UAS and AAM technologies, focusing on the safety implications of nascent UAS operational concepts, their testing and certification, as well as the emerging technologies needed to support the development of new regulatory standards.

For more information about NARTP, visit nartp.com or contact NARTP President/CEO Howard Kyle at (609) 377-6215.

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