

Erin Roesler Honored with UAS Sky Pioneer Award at 2025 UAS Summit & Expo

Erin Roesler, Deputy Executive Director of Northern Plains UAS Test Site, receives the 2025 UAS Sky Pioneer Award at the 19th Annual UAS Summit & Expo

GRAND FORKS, ND, UNITED STATES, October 15, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Erin Roesler, deputy executive director of the Northern Plains UAS Test Site (NPUASTS), received the UAS Sky Pioneer Award on Oct. 15 during the general session of the 19th annual [UAS Summit & Expo](#), produced by [UAS Magazine](#).

The Sky Pioneer Award recognizes individuals who have made groundbreaking contributions to the unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) industry. Recipients demonstrate a pioneering spirit and have significantly advanced the field through leadership, innovation and technological breakthroughs.

Roesler is recognized as a trailblazer in the UAS industry, known for her leadership, technical expertise and impact on aviation. With more than 15 years of experience, she has advanced UAS operations, integration and policy, influencing regulatory frameworks, standards bodies, academia and operational deployments.

As deputy executive director of the Northern Plains UAS Test Site, one of seven Federal Aviation Administration–designated test sites, Roesler serves as program executive for Vantis, North Dakota’s beyond-visual-line-of-sight (BVLOS) initiative. Vantis is the first statewide infrastructure network enabling safe, scalable and economically viable BVLOS operations. Roesler played a key role in its conception, regulatory approvals and operationalization, establishing North Dakota as a blueprint for nationwide BVLOS integration.

She also guided the Air and Ground Risk Group, aligning more than 80 organizations to develop recommendations that will support the FAA’s forthcoming Part 108 rulemaking. Her influence



Erin Roesler, recipient of the 2025 UAS Sky Pioneer Award, is presented the award by John Nelson, COO of BBI International.

extends to global industry standards, helping define how BVLOS operations will become normalized and scalable in the United States.

Roesler has also had a lasting impact as an educator and mentor. As assistant chief pilot – UAS and adjunct lecturer at the University of North Dakota, she developed training curricula for platforms such as the Boeing Insitu ScanEagle and AFRL MQ-1/9 simulators, overseeing instruction for more than 200 students. Under her leadership, UND became the first program in the world to achieve AABI accreditation for UAS, setting a global benchmark for education in the field.

She has demonstrated how UAS can serve the public good in times of crisis. At NPUASTS, she directed emergency response efforts during Red River flooding and severe statewide winter storms, coordinating operators, credentialing teams and delivering critical aerial data to decision-makers. For this work, she was nominated for the 2019 North Dakota Governor's Award for Excellence in Public Service.

In 2022, Roesler was inducted into the inaugural class of the Women in Emerging Aviation Technologies Hall of Fame, honored at CES in Las Vegas. She was one of just 12 women worldwide recognized for visionary contributions shaping the future of uncrewed aviation.

"The work I've been able to do has only been possible because of the amazing people I've had the chance to collaborate with — at NPUASTS, at UND, across the industry and throughout North Dakota," Roesler said. "This award reflects the impact of those people and partnerships. I love leading people, teams and working groups that further this industry."

"This year's recognition is especially meaningful," said John Nelson, chief operating officer of UAS Magazine. "The first two recipients of the Sky Pioneer Award were U.S. senators who shaped national policy. To now honor Erin, someone who has brought that vision to life through execution, innovation and mentorship, marks an evolution in this award. She represents the leaders building the future of aviation from the ground up."

Roesler is widely regarded as an architect of the UAS revolution. Her vision, innovation and leadership embody the pioneering spirit the Sky Pioneer Award was created to honor.

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