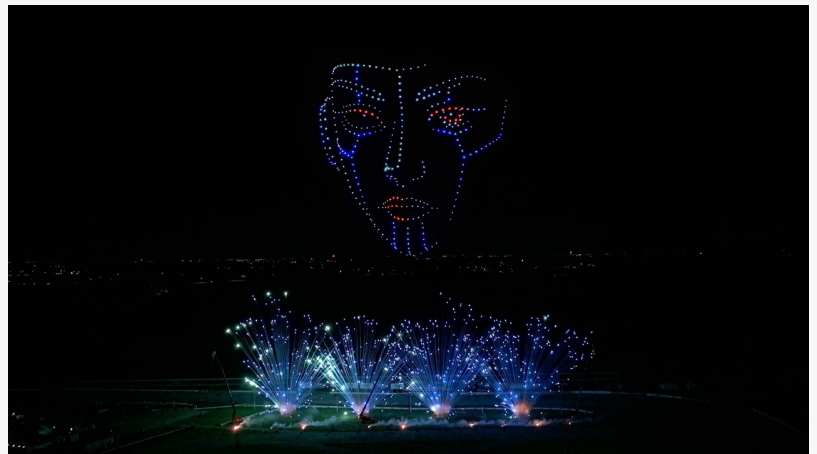


Drone-And-Firework Shows Return to 52nd Pyrotechnics Guild International, Cementing Integration as an Event Signature

Drone show operators powered by Verge Aero joined forces with pyrotechnicians at PGI 2026 as social media buzz drove record ticket interest.

KAUKAUNA, WI, UNITED STATES, September 1, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Verge Aero, the [drone show technology company](#) powering the world's largest network of drone show operators, announced in August that its partner network returned to the [Pyrotechnics Guild International \(PGI\) convention](#) for the fourth year running, further establishing integrated drone-and-pyrotechnic displays as a signature feature of the annual event.



Drones and fireworks share the stage at the PGI 2026 convention.

“

The drones have changed everything. It just showed everyone, whatever you can dream, you can actually do now.”

*Craig Hetherington, PGI
President*

At this year's convention, held at the Wisconsin International Speedway, a team of Verge-powered operators flew several hundred light show drones alongside pyrotechnics for thousands of ticket holders and PGI members on multiple public display nights. Precision Fireworks led the pyrotechnics for the headlining integrated display on Saturday, August 8th, while Spirit of '76 Fireworks co-presented the National Anthem display featuring drones on Wednesday, August 12th.

A Tradition Born From a Viral Moment:

Verge Aero [first integrated drones with fireworks](#) on the PGI stage in 2023, when a dystopian performance — featuring a robot depicted with drones that “attacked” with fireworks — went viral and reshaped industry expectations for what live pyrotechnic entertainment could look like. Since then, the collaboration has grown into an annual tradition: a narrative-driven “Cosmos”

display in 2024, the 2,500-drone "Quest" production in 2025, and this year's musically-driven show.

"The drones have changed everything, including pyromusicals," said Craig Hetherington, PGI President, who first envisioned drones at the convention after seeing Verge Aero featured on America's Got Talent: Extreme. "The robot face was revolutionary. It just showed everyone, whatever you can dream, you can actually do now."

Driving Audience Engagement: Social media emerged as the top driver of ticket sales for the PGI's public display nights this year, according to PGI's Social Media Lead and Verge Aero team member Rachel Harrison, who credited footage from prior years' drone-and-firework shows with capturing audience attention. "That footage became one of the most useful visual tools I had throughout the campaign," Harrison said. "We weren't just trying to show fireworks, but show an experience people may not have seen before."

Longtime pyrotechnician and photographer Tom Calderwood, who witnessed this year's show, told Verge Aero he was "gobsmacked" with the integration, citing the show's clever timing and the way pyrotechnics were used to hide and reveal the drones in sync with music.

A Partnership Rooted in Shared Craft:

Verge Aero and its network of operators — including BrightWave FX, Chicago Drone Light Shows, Fantasy Drone Shows, FlyLight Drone Shows, Northern Lights Drone Shows, Sky Harmony Drone Shows, Vector Aerial Systems, Vegas Drones, Fireworks by Grucci, and Adhoc Creative House — worked closely with the pyrotechnics industry to bring this year's shows to life. Many team members across the network began their careers in pyrotechnics, reflecting a deep, longstanding connection between the two crafts.

"It's amazing to see drones become a staple of the public's PGI experience, and it's an honor for



Drones compliment expert firework effects at the PGI 2026 convention.



Drones form two figures, a man and a woman, separated by a heart-shape burst of pyrotechnics at PGI 2026.

the Verge Partner Network to play a major role in that," said Chris Lutts, Vice President of Sales at Verge Aero. "I myself have been involved in the fireworks industry for over two decades, and I see drone show companies following a similar trajectory as firework display companies. We're all chasing the next big thing in live entertainment, and integrations like this are key to growing it."

Verge Aero maintains that drones and fireworks are complementary art forms rather than competitors, and continues to support organizations including PGI and the American Pyrotechnics Association (APA) to help advance both mediums together.

Looking Ahead:

With planning already underway, Verge Aero and its network partners are preparing new drone-and-pyrotechnic integrations for PGI 2027.

About Verge Aero:

Verge Aero designs and develops drone show technology in the USA for global operations, powering the world's largest network of drone show operators. Its systems are recognized by global airspace authorities including the FAA and EASA. Learn more at www.verge.aero.

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