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Virginia to Launch Unmanned Aerial Systems Flight Information Exchange

~ Multi-agency collaboration to create pilot program that will help ensure Virginia has the safest and most open UAS airspace in the U.S. ~

RICHMOND—The Virginia Department of Aviation (DOAV) and Center for Innovative Technology (CIT) today announced the launch of the Virginia Flight Information Exchange pilot program, a tool that will allow state and local governments to share information among unmanned aerial systems (UAS) stakeholders and address key safety and policy concerns while keeping the airspace open, secure, and integrated with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) control of the national airspace. Virginia Flight Information Exchange will ensure the Commonwealth balances both the safest and most open UAS airspace in the country.

The Virginia Flight Information Exchange is a platform for state and local government agencies to publish and share advisory information with each other, UAS Service Suppliers (USS), unmanned system operators, and the public to promote transparency and public safety. The pilot program will evaluate the benefits of information sharing, inform thoughtful regulation, and demonstrate a state-supported approach to UAS communications and coordination.

The pilot program was developed through a public-private collaboration with the Virginia DOAV, CIT and its Virginia Unmanned Systems Center, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), and Advanced Technology Applications (ATA), a leading data science and engineering company in Northern Virginia.

“Innovation plays a critical role in the continuous evolution of Virginia’s multimodal transportation network,” **said Virginia Secretary of Transportation Shannon Valentine**. “The development of the Virginia Flight Information Exchange demonstrates Virginia’s commitment to collaborative solutions and the future of the emerging UAS industry sector.”

The Virginia Flight Information Exchange will be the first state-sponsored authoritative Supplemental Data Service Provider (SDSP) to exist in the FAA's UAS Traffic Management (UTM), which is an ecosystem of infrastructure and protocols enabling the management of low-altitude drone operations.

“With one of the strongest technology workforces in the country, Virginia has been an aggressive early adopter of UAS, and the Flight Information Exchange furthers our Commonwealth's reputation as an industry leader,” **said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Brian Ball.** “By working with Virginia industry leaders like ATA, we support the growth of unmanned aerial systems capabilities and opportunities throughout the Commonwealth. We're very proud that Virginia is playing a key role in UAS, and it's exciting to be part of this rapidly evolving industry.”

“It is great to be working with a team willing to collaborate, experiment, and share lessons learned,” **said Craig Parisot, Chief Executive Officer of ATA, LLC.** “We are helping states and localities gain a necessary technical capability while setting an important example for how states can support the growth of UAS and commercial UTM solutions in a manner that best serves the public interest.”

For more information on the Virginia Flight Information Exchange, go to www.doav.virginia.gov.