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## **North Dakota Department of Transportation and Northern Plains UAS Test Site Announce Partners for FAA BEYOND Program**

GRAND FORKS, ND – The North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) and the Northern Plains UAS Test Site (NPUASTS) are partnering with major players in the commercial UAS industry to execute the goals of the Federal Aviation Administration’s (FAA) BEYOND program.

“We are incredibly excited to announce our partnerships with such innovative companies from within North Dakota and across the country,” said NDDOT Director Bill Panos. “Partnerships like this keep us at the cutting edge of UAS advancements.”

These partners include:

- Airspace Link, an FAA-approved UAS Service Supplier of Low Altitude Authorization and Notification Capability (LAANC), focused on meeting the needs of state and local governments and ensuring UAS pilots can make informed decisions;
- Equinor, an energy company developing oil, gas, wind and solar energy in more than 30 countries, including a strong presence in North Dakota;
- iSight Drone Services, the first private UAS company in North Dakota, they provide professional UAS operations, setting the bar on scalable and mature operations management;
- Skydio, a leading U.S. manufacturer of autonomous, small UAS that use Artificial Intelligence to see and understand their surroundings and intelligently navigate complex environments for industrial inspections and public safety;
- SkySkopes, a professional drone service provider, based in North Dakota, that is focused on bringing innovative solutions to the energy sector;
- Volansi, a commercial manufacturer and operator of vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) autonomous flight systems that is focused on airworthiness and certification;

- Workhorse, an autonomous solutions provider supporting airworthiness, certification, and operations support, primarily for package delivery;
- Xcel Energy, leading organization using autonomous technologies in support of energy technologies and energy delivery.

BEYOND aims to facilitate the successful integration of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), or drones, into the National Airspace System, with a particular focus on operations beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) of the operator that are repeatable, scalable, and economically viable. These efforts will be bolstered by Vantis, North Dakota's UAS Network, which is designed to enable real-world BVLOS flights without extreme barriers to entry.

“It’s incredibly advantageous that North Dakota is a powerhouse in UAS,” said Nicholas Flom, executive director of NPUASTS. “Having BEYOND and Vantis in the same location, and having the expertise and reputation to draw these leaders in commercial UAS operations in, means that we are well-positioned to execute the goals of BEYOND.”

#### **About the North Dakota Department of Transportation**

The North Dakota Department of Transportation, established in 1917, is an innovative and progressive organization with the mission to safely move people and goods. NDDOT strives to build and maintain an efficient transportation system of more than 8,518 miles of roadway and 4,858 bridges.

Innovation and integration of the UAS BEYOND program is key in expanding NDDOT's future vision for traffic safety, autonomous technology, and partnerships. For more information, visit [dot.nd.gov](http://dot.nd.gov).

#### **About the Northern Plains UAS Test Site**

The [Northern Plains UAS Test Site](#) is one of seven Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) unmanned aircraft system (UAS) test sites in the nation. The mission of the NPUASTS is to collaborate with FAA and industry partners to develop systems, rules, and procedures to safely integrate unmanned aircraft into the National Airspace System without negatively impacting existing general or commercial aviation.

NPUASTS is also administering [Vantis](#), North Dakota's UAS Network.