



**Savannah River
National Laboratory®**

Office of Communications

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Savannah River National Laboratory UAS Team Receives National Recognition

Aiken, S.C. (March 31, 2021) – Savannah River National Laboratory’s (SRNL) Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) team is the recipient of the 2020 Department of Energy (DOE) UAS Unit Award, an award given by the DOE’s Office of Aviation Management.

The award is based upon the following criteria: management, operations, maintenance, training, safety, and best practices. Nominations of UAS teams were reviewed and judged by a blue-ribbon panel, which included high-level military officers and aviation management professionals.

“The key to the success of this team was the hard work and partnership developed between the DOE and SRNL,” stated Tony Polk, director, Savannah River Office, Department of Energy. “I look forward to seeing that partnership carried forward into future endeavors.”

SRNL’s UAS team is comprised of FAA 14 CFR Part 107 certified pilots and visual observers. During the last fiscal year, SRNL logged more than 100 pilot hours and conducted missions that included infrastructure inspection, aerial photography and videography, emergency response exercise support, training and currency, research and development activities, and other U.S. government support. The UAS unit currently has 10 aircraft in its inventory and the team works closely with the DOE-SR aviation manager and safety officer to plan and conduct on-site missions under an approved flight readiness review board. All flights are conducted with an approved Public Aircraft Declaration with FAA approved exemption.

Additionally, the SRNL UAS unit has recently been approved to conduct unmanned aircraft flights “Beyond Visual Line of Sight,” or flying the aircraft beyond the direct sight of the pilot and/or visual observer. This was the first such approval granted by the FAA in its eastern sector (17 states from Mississippi to Maine) for a non-public safety organization.

The United States Department of Energy (DOE) Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL) is a multi-program research and development center that puts science to work to protect the nation by providing practical, cost-effective solutions to the nation’s environmental, nuclear security, nuclear materials management, and energy manufacturing challenges.

We put science to work.™



SRNL UAS Team from left to right: Dave Premo, Tommy Sessions, Todd Coleman, Troy Lorier, Kirby Scott, Ben Robinson, Mark Spurlock, Jeff Steedley, Kyle Strom, Ron Bartholomew and Dalton Hare.

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