 Ohio Federal Research Network

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July 17, 2018

OFRN Awards $6.3 million in Round 3 Grants to Advance UAV Innovations.

The Ohio Federal Research Network (OFRN) awarded $6.3 million to four teams in support of unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) research and development (R&D). Funding was awarded under OFRN's Sustaining Ohio's Aeronautical Readiness and Innovation in the Next Generation (SOARING) initiative, OFRN's third round of R&D funding. The SOARING initiative is designed to expand Ohio's leadership in defense and commercial aerospace research, development, and sustainment of unmanned air systems (UASs), personal air vehicles (PAVs), and logistics delivery air vehicles (LDVs). SOARING funding leverages Ohio's unique aerospace assets to assist recipients in overcoming critical technical barriers and challenges.

The four awarded projects are:

- **Autonomous/ Remote Piloted "Air Uber" System**, led by Persistent Surveillance Systems in Dayton, Ohio.
- **Regional Unmanned Traffic Management System** led by University of Cincinnati in Cincinnati, Ohio.
- **UAV Detect-and-Avoid Sensor Fusion**, led by Ghostwave Inc. in Columbus, Ohio.
- **Brushless Doubly-Fed Machine (BDFM) and Drive System** led by The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio.

The four awarded projects which are comprised of collaborators from across the state of Ohio and beyond include the following universities and industries: Ohio University (Athens, Ohio); Sinclair College (Dayton, Ohio); University of Dayton Research Institute (Dayton, Ohio); Wright State University (Dayton, Ohio); Autonodyne (opening office in Ohio); Bosma Technical Services (Tipp City, Ohio); Demeter UAVs (Springfield, Ohio); Event 38 Unmanned Systems (Akron, OH); IS4S (opening office in Beavercreek, Ohio); Lockheed Martin Procerus Technologies (Vineyard, Utah); MacAir Aviation (Xenia, Ohio); MacNauchtan Development (Xenia, Ohio); SAFRAN (Twinsburg, Ohio); Simlat Inc. (Miamisburg, Ohio); and ZIN Technologies (Cleveland, Ohio).

SOARING includes unique requirements designed to accelerate R&D into real-world applications. Projects must focus on priority research initiatives of the Air Force Research Lab (AFRL), the Naval Medical Research Unit Dayton (NAMRU-D), the National Air and Space Intelligence Center (NASIC), and the National Aeronautical and Space Administration's Glenn Research Center (NASA-GRC). Each project includes at least two Ohio universities, one industry member, and engagement with an Ohio-based arm of a federal partner.

Applicants must also propose a live flight demonstration for the technologies they develop. According to Ricky Peters, chair of the OFRN Executive Review Board, "[these awards] will drive innovation. Each requires an actual demonstration at the end of the project which is very exciting. I think our only concern is that we were only able to award funding to four of the five recommended projects. We are hopeful that we'll be able to identify additional funds because all of the recommended proposals are of such caliber they deserve to move forward."

Review of the 33 submitted proposals was performed by an independent Technical Review Council (TRC). "OFRN's Technical Review Council is really quite unique as it consists of engineers, academics, business executives and other key stakeholders from Ohio-based federal labs, the Ohio Third Frontier, and the National Academy of Sciences," stated Viktoria Greanya, chair of the TRC and the principal and founder of Morpho Sciences, Inc. "OFRN's process is rigorous. The criteria includes alignment with federal needs and Ohio capabilities, technical approach, and commercialization strategy. We look at the project team, budget, schedule, and of course, potential economic impact for the State."

In just three years, OFRN has leveraged $32 million in state funds to attract nearly $120 million in new research awards, and $350 million more in its funding pipeline. OFRN research projects include 11 universities and community colleges throughout the state and 56 industry partners. Executive Director Dennis Andersh noted, "Because of OFRN, we are now seeing groups of researchers from both the public and private sector working together with our federal partners to leverage Ohio's research assets, in ways that had never occurred before."

About OFRN. The Ohio Federal Research Network (OFRN) is a unique applied research collaborative created by the Ohio General Assembly in 2015. OFRN's intent is to create external investment and business opportunities for Ohio. OFRN's vision is to drive innovation among Ohio's research universities, community colleges, and industry. OFRN focuses on priority research initiatives of Ohio-based federal partners, including the Air Force Research Lab (AFRL), the Naval Medical Research Unit Dayton (NAMRU-D), the National Air and Space Intelligence Center (NASIC), and the National Aeronautical and Space Administration's Glenn Research Center (NASA-GRC).

For more information about the Ohio Federal Research Network, go to www.ohiofrn.org

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