PRESS RELEASE
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PENDLETON UAS RANGE WELCOMES JESSE STEELE AS NEW RANGE MANAGER

Former United States Navy Operations Officer and DCMA Test Pilot to Lead America's Most Turnkey UAS Range

Pendleton, OR – October 2025

The City of Pendleton is excited to announce the appointment of Jesse Steele as the new UAS Range Manager for the Pendleton UAS Range (PUR), America's most turnkey and business-friendly UAS range. Steele joins the Pendleton team with over a decade of experience in flight operations, mission planning, and test program management, including leadership roles with the U.S. Department of War and Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA). His career includes directing large-scale air operations aboard the USS Lewis B. Puller, managing over 600 flight test missions for rotary-wing and tilt-rotor aircraft, and ensuring operational compliance and safety across high-tempo test environments.

"Jesse brings an exceptional combination of technical expertise, leadership experience, and operational discipline to the Pendleton UAS Range," said Steve Chrisman, Airport & Economic Development Director for the City of Pendleton. "His background as a test pilot and operations officer aligns perfectly with our mission of providing fast, flexible, and safe operating environments for commercial and defense customers."

As Range Manager, Steele will oversee daily operations, customer coordination, airspace management, and flight safety, while advancing PUR's long-term strategy of increasing innovation and economic growth within Oregon's UAS and aerospace sector. He will also serve as PUR's primary liaison to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), and commercial and defense customers operating in Pendleton's 14,000 square miles of FAA-approved airspace.



"Pendleton's reputation for being America's most turney UAS range is well-earned," said Jesse Steele, UAS Range Manager. "I'm excited to hit the ground running and join a team that's known for finding a way to yes, cutting the red tape, and helping customers move from concept to flight faster and more affordably than anywhere else in the country."

Steele's appointment marks a continued period of growth for the Pendleton UAS Range. With recent investments in new infrastructure, including the new 18,000 square foot Flex III Hangar scheduled for completion in January 2026, PUR continues to expand it's capabilities and capacity for both defense and commercial companies.

About Pendleton UAS Range

Pendleton UAS Range (PUR), owned and operated by the City of Pendleton, is America's most turnkey UAS range for fast, safe, and affordable UAS testing and development. PUR covers 14,000 sq. mi. of FAA-approved airspace in northeast Oregon with operations approved to 15,000 ft. MSL in over 50 diverse climates and terrains. Purpose-built infrastructure and facilities include state-of-the-art hangars, 16 UAS test pads with water, power, and 10 Gbps fiber, a UAS-friendly air traffic control tower, three mobile command centers, machine shop, and a 160-acre UAS industrial park with shovel-ready ground. Led by an experienced team that takes the tedium out of testing, PUR is on a mission to fuel UAS innovation, stimulate economic growth, and attract investment to the State of Oregon.

Learn more at: www.pendletonuasrange.com

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