



September 26, 2019

Contact: Susan Christensen, 541-612-7142

## **Pendleton Secures \$3 Million Federal Investment to Expand Operations at UAS Range**

***Grant matches local, state funds to build new infrastructure***

PENDLETON, Ore. – The U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) announced this week that it is awarding \$3 million in grant funds to the City of Pendleton to support expansion of the Pendleton Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) Range. This investment will help provide the infrastructure needed to support the rapidly growing UAS industry in Pendleton, which now has the most active civilian UAS test range on the West Coast.

The Pendleton UAS project is within the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Plan of the Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation (GEODC). The City of Pendleton partnered with GEODC to request and secure the funding.

“This is a perfect example of how Economic Development Districts around the country can partner and collaborate with their communities to create and retain jobs,” said GEODC Executive Director Susan Christensen.

As part of the award, federal funds will leverage investments from various local and state sources for a total investment of \$6 million. EDA’s investment will support construction of additional T-hangars and a box hangar, as well as supporting infrastructure improvements on approximately 11 acres.

“Pendleton has shown strong leadership in building a new tech economy that creates good-paying jobs in Eastern Oregon around groundbreaking advances in Unmanned Aerial Systems,” said Senator Ron Wyden. “I heard firsthand when visiting with PAE ISR this summer just how much these new well-paid aerospace jobs fit rural Oregon. I appreciate the community’s work and have been proud to team up with local officials to support this EDA grant.”

Pendleton’s congressional delegation actively worked to support the City’s grant request and coordinated between EDA and the Federal Aviation Administration as the City worked through the lengthy application process.

“The Eastern Oregon Regional Airport plays a critical role in the region’s economy, especially for Pendleton,” said Congressman Greg Walden. “The UAS Range is one of the leading ranges in the world, and I was happy to work with local officials on securing this grant in an effort to further support development of the range. I look forward to seeing it pay off for the City of Pendleton and all of eastern Oregon.”

As the largest public airport in northeast Oregon, the Eastern Oregon Regional Airport provides three daily round trip commercial flights from Pendleton to Portland and hosts a test range in one of just six Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) sites established by the FAA. In addition to turnkey UAS flight test support, outstanding weather, 14,000 square miles of diverse testing environments, and superb logistical support for commercial drone developers, Pendleton has built new hangars, test pads, and additional infrastructure to attract these companies.

“There’s not a better place in the nation for a UAS test range,” said U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley. “This grant for Pendleton is of extreme value to the industry, and to the economy of the region. I will continue to use my seat on the Senate’s spending committee, the Appropriations Committee, to support a strong Economic Development Agency (EDA) to strengthen rural Oregon and rural America.”

Through significant investment and an outstanding track record, the Pendleton UAS Range has secured numerous contracts from high-profile UAS companies and begun to reap economic benefits from activity at the range. Companies currently employ over 50 full-time employees with another 50 positions open and actively being marketed. A recent economic impact study commissioned by the UAS Range found that growth-related businesses could create 626 permanent jobs by 2040 and generate more than \$106 million in total economic benefits.

# # #

Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation is a regional economic development non-profit sanctioned by the Department of Commerce to support job creation and economic growth by assisting to create, retain, and expand businesses. GEODC teams with local government to develop human and physical infrastructure to support these businesses and the communities they serve. We offer a variety of lending and grant-writing programs to assist with land/building acquisition, new construction, equipment/machinery, fixtures, inventory, supplies, and working capital.