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NASA Selects Hosts for Final Drone Technical Testing

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This week, NASA selected the Nevada Institute for Autonomous Systems in Las Vegas and the Lone Star UAS Center for Excellence and Innovation in Corpus Christi, Texas to host the final phase of its four-year series of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) technical demonstrations. Both of these organizations will host demonstrations to confirm whether NASA's UAS Traffic Management (UTM) system functions safely and effectively in urban areas.

The drone flights will take place in Reno, Nevada between the months of March and June; in Corpus Christi, Texas the flights will take place in July and August.

The goal of these demonstrations is to help the commercial drone industry better understand the challenges of flying a drone in an urban environment. Additionally, these test flights will also help the industry and the Federal Aviation Administration in developing rules, policies and traffic management procedures for drone operation in heavily populated areas.

The technologies to be tested include airspace regulator Flight Information Management System, the UAS Service Supplier interface for multiple independent UAS traffic management service providers, and their interface with vehicle integrated detect-and-avoid capabilities, vehicle-to-vehicle communication and collision avoidance, and automated safe landing technologies.

Ronald Johnson, NASA's UTM project manager, said, "This phase represents the most complicated demonstration of advanced UAS operating in a demanding urban environment that will have been tested to date."

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