This week, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) issued a task order contract to the New York UAS Test Site for an unmanned aircraft system (UAS or drone) integration project. The project is designed to assist in the development of a UAS traffic management (UTM) system and to promote the safe operation of high-volume drone operations. This UTM Field Test project (Project) will be overseen by the Northeast UAS Airspace Integration Research Alliance, Inc. (NUAIR), a New York-based nonprofit that manages the operations of the FAA-designated New York UAS Test Site at Griffiss International Airport in Rome, New York. NUAIR led the efforts for New York’s 50-mile UAS Corridor that runs between the cities of Rome and Syracuse. The Project will be conducted in this Corridor and will provide the FAA with information useful to policy development and standards for beyond visual line-of-sight drone operations. Such operations are critical to the advancement and widespread integration of commercial drone operations in the national airspace at low altitudes.
The demand for the operation of drones in low altitude airspace (i.e., below 400 feet) continues to increase, especially after the pandemic, when the desire for at-home and instantaneous delivery grew. The FAA seeks to support these complex drone operations in a safe and efficient manner. Projects like the Field Test will assist in improving UTM and other necessary technologies and systems. The Project went live in July and is set for completion by Spring 2023. In addition to NUAIR’s management of the Project, ANRA Technologies, AX Enterprize, Cal Analytics, Oneida County Sheriff’s Office, Oneida Indian Nation, and OneSky will partner and collaborate as well. Through these industry partners and local government, the UTM infrastructure will be updated so the FAA and the drone community can help build a better ecosystem.

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