

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AURORA, GENERAL DYNAMICS INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY WIN AIR FORCE
LONG-ENDURANCE UAV CONTRACT

Lawmakers say vehicle would remain airborne for 5-8 days

COLUMBUS, MS -- Aurora Flight Sciences Corporation has been awarded a subcontract from General Dynamics Information Technology, Inc., under contract to the U.S. Air Force to demonstrate extremely long endurance flights of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), federal lawmakers said Wednesday.

U. S. Rep. Roger Wicker and Sens. Thad Cochran and Trent Lott said Aurora, a leader in the design and production of specialized unmanned aircraft, partnered with General Dynamics Corporation to win the contract from the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL), Air Vehicles Directorate. AFRL's implementation plan for its "Ultra Long Endurance" UAV Flight Demonstrator will benefit from and leverage Aurora's "Orion" aircraft program which began in 2006. Orion is a long endurance UAV currently in development at Aurora's Columbus, Mississippi, manufacturing plant.

The goal is to create a timely and cost-effective means of providing a long-term unmanned eye over the battlefield or other areas of interest. "The program takes advantage of one of the things Aurora does best; using its full range of capabilities, facilities and expertise to advance existing technology," said John Langford, Aurora's President and CEO.

"This is good news for Aurora and for the Golden Triangle," Rep. Wicker said. "It is the third competitively-awarded contract the company has won in six months, signifying the confidence the Defense Department has in Aurora's ability to provide state-of-the-art technology to strengthen our national defense."

Sen. Cochran said, "Mississippi is fortunate to serve as the home of such a high technology company as Aurora Flight Sciences. Unmanned Aerial Vehicles provide a capability that is often cheaper, safer, and better suited for missions than manned crafts, and their role in national security, reconnaissance, and even weather prediction will increase over time. I am pleased that the Department of Defense has once again recognized the quality products being produced in Mississippi by awarding this contract to Aurora."

Sen. Lott said, "More and more our military forces are utilizing unmanned vehicles to obtain better battlefield intelligence and have more combat capability with less risk of life. This program joins other UAV production already in Mississippi, helping make our state one of the design and construction leaders in this particular aerospace segment. As our military continues to pursue terrorists throughout the globe with UAVs and other innovative technology, we're bound to see more UAVs employed for various national security missions."

Also supporting the program will be two of the nation's experts in aircraft aerodynamic analysis and design, Dr. Mark Drela, Professor of Aerodynamics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Harold Youngren, founder of Aerocraft Consulting, with extensive experience in aerodynamic design and analysis of tilt rotor and fixed wing UAV systems.

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