

NASA teams with drone company to test UAS tech in Pendleton

By Antonio Sierra
East Oregonian

Amid a year of growth in operations at the Pendleton Unmanned Aerial Systems Range, drone company PAE ISR signed a deal with NASA to develop and demonstrate sensory technology on its Resolute Eagle drone.

Jake Jacobs, the chief technology officer at PAE ISR, said the company is expected to utilize the drone's sense and avoid capabilities for a demonstration in 2020.

Pendleton UAS Range Manager Darryl Abling said a drone's ability to either autonomously avoid or send information to a pilot about other potential aircraft or obstacles will be critical to the integration of UAS into the national airspace.

While the Federal Aviation Administration has usually been the primary agency involved with bringing unmanned aircraft into the public skies, Jacobs said NASA is acting as the “middleman” in this demonstration.

Jacobs said that if the demonstrations put on by PAE and other two companies selected out of 88 proposals is successful, the federal government could use the technology as the standard for future drones.

Abling said the NASA project will mean more activity at the range as PAE ISR ramps up operations over the next two years ahead of the demonstration.

PAE ISR has seen a quick rise to prominence at the

Pendleton airport, moving from a back room at the range's Mission Control and Innovation Center to the massive World War II-era hangar near the airport terminal.

Steve Chrisman, Pendleton airport manager and economic development director, said the hangar used to act as aircraft storage and a “giant aviary” that rented for 164,000, but PAE ISR has made some renovations of its own.

The drone company is installing new floors and converting some of the side rooms into a lobby, meeting room, and office space.

All of this has been made possible because the Sterling, Virginia-based company's business is expanding.

In addition to the NASA partnership, PAE ISR already has a contract with the Navy to develop Resolute Eagle for surveillance and reconnaissance missions.

Ken Bisconer, PAE ISR's West Coast director of flight operations, said the company's personnel presence in Pendleton has grown from 10 to 27, and he's currently looking to hire three more people.

Bisconer said he's hired four people from the Oregon Army National Guard's Pendleton facility and two more who were previously stationed in Pendleton and wanted to move back.

Among the roles Bisconer is looking to fill is an electric engineer position.

He also prefers hiring locally because they'll know where to find the right parts and already have a network of connections.

Bisconer anticipated that the company's operation in Pendleton could double within the next year.

“It's just a crazy time for us right now,” he said.

Bisconer also highlighted the company's work in the community, which includes donating technology to a Pendleton Parks and Recreation drone program and opening discussions with Blue Mountain Community College about starting a UAS training class.

For Abling, it's proof that the city's early investments in the command center and other infrastructure were

worth the money.

Bisconer said PAE ISR considered several places to locate their drone testing operation, but Pendleton's resources and customer service put them over the top.

“If you don't have it, they'll find some place that will,” Abling said.

But as PAE ISR and other companies start to grow at the airport, the UAS range could become a victim of its own success.

Bisconer said he anticipated that PAE ISR would need an additional hangar in six to nine months.

With no vacant hangars to spare, Chrisman said one of the airport's main challenges is finding a way to build more hangar space to meet demand.

Commissioner: Officials ignored subpoenas over misconduct

The Associated Press

PORTLAND — Oregon's State Labor Commissioner has accused legislators of ignoring subpoenas issued by his agency in its investigation of sexual harassment at the Capitol.

The Wednesday court filings seek contempt of court rulings and \$1,000 a day in fines against Senate President Peter Courtney, House Speaker Tina Kotek, Senate Republican Leader Jackie

Winters and nine others who Brad Avakian accuses of disregarding subpoenas, The Oregonian/OregonLive reported .

The subpoenas were necessary because Avakian has reason to believe they would protect key documents from “imminent destruction,” according to the filing.

In August, Avakian filed a complaint with his own Bureau of Labor and Industries, accusing fellow Democrats

of covering up a culture of sexual harassment at the Capitol. Avakian charged that Kotek, Courtney and officials including Legislature attorney Dexter Johnson and human resources director Lore Christopher failed to stop sexual harassment by then-Sen. Jeff Kruse despite longstanding complaints against him.

Republican Sen. Jeff Kruse was found to have sexually harassed or groped a number

of women at the Capitol following a legislative investigation. He resigned in March.

Through a private attorney, Edward Harnden, legislative officials subpoenaed by the bureau all declined to turn over requested records and sit for interviews.

They argued its demand for information was overly broad, and said compliance would require them to break pledges of confidentiality made to people who reported

harassment. Lawmakers additionally have argued they are exempt from labor laws that govern other employers and are not susceptible to the labor commissioner's investigatory powers.

Avakian has responded that the legislators “are not above the law and their conduct is not beyond all scrutiny.”

Representatives for Courtney, Kotek and Winters directed questions to Harnden Thursday, who said he's

confident a judge will find no wrongdoing by members of the Legislature.

Avakian is overstepping his authority “and he knows it,” Harnden told the newspaper.

Judge Stephen Bushong of Multnomah County set a Nov. 19 hearing to consider Avakian's arguments.

Avakian was not immediately available for comment Thursday, according to his spokeswoman.

OREGON IN BRIEF

From wire reports

Pendleton man faces federal time for molestation

PENDLETON —Shane Britton of Pendleton faces upward of two years in federal prison for molesting a girl on the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

A federal jury in Portland on Wednesday found Britton, 43, guilty of abusive sexual contact. According to court documents, Britton molested the minor in June 2016 while staying with her and her mother at their home on the Umatilla Indian Reservation near Pendleton. The girl and her mother are members of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office for Oregon. Britton is not a tribal member.

The evidence at the two-day trial showed Britton “subjected the victim to a series of unwanted and progressively more invasive physical encounters,” the U.S. Attorney's Office reported. “In a recorded interview, Britton initially denied the allegation of abusive sexual contact, but later admitted he inappropriately touched the victim.”

The FBI investigated the case with the Umatilla Tribal Police Department. Britton's sentencing is Jan. 23, 2019, before U.S. District Judge Michael H. Simon. The maximum sentence for the crime is two years in prison, a \$250,000 fine and five years of post-prison supervision.

teller transferred the money despite the bank placing a flag on the account, warning of past suspicious or fraudulent activity.

According to the suit, Adams tried to stop the transfer, and the bank claimed it was able to “delete” the transfer and that her money was back in her account.

A Bank of America representative says the company is investigating the complaint.

US government asks Supreme Court to halt climate lawsuit

EUGENE — The federal government has again asked the U.S. Supreme Court to intervene in a climate change lawsuit filed by a group of young people that is scheduled to go to trial in Oregon later this month.

The Register-Guard reports government attorneys filed a mandamus petition Thursday seeking to dismiss the case, which aims to force the government to take action on climate change.

A group of 21 young people filed the suit in 2015, arguing that the federal government's actions violate their constitutional rights. The suit seeks a court order directing the government to stop permitting, authorizing and subsidizing fossil fuels and to work to stabilize the climate.

Clark College to close because of planned protest

VANCOUVER, Wash. (AP) — Clark College in Vancouver will close Monday in response to a planned campus demonstration by right-wing group Patriot Prayer.

President Bob Knight in a letter encouraged students, staff and faculty to avoid the campus for the day if possible. He cited past violence associated with the group and concerns from the school community.

The Clark College event is one of two Vancouver college campus demonstrations planned by Patriot

Prayer next week in protest of Initiative 1639, a Washington state bill that would require more background checks for people buying semi-automatic rifles, an increased age limit for those gun buyers to 21.

Two students sickened after eating marijuana-infused Oreos

MEDFORD — Two students at South Medford High School were taken to a hospital by ambulance after eating Oreo cookies drizzled with marijuana-infused oil.

The Mail Tribune reports Friday that the students were conscious and able to talk while they were being transported on Thursday afternoon.

District spokeswoman Natalie Hurd tells the newspaper that a third student got sick on Tuesday and may have also ingested marijuana, but the evidence isn't as clear.

The district says it is seeing an increase in the use of marijuana edibles among students.

Medford police and the school district are still investigating the cause of the first reported overdose on Tuesday.

Man awaiting trial on sex abuse charges disappears

REDMOND — A Redmond man who was awaiting trial on several sex abuse charges has removed his GPS monitoring ankle bracelet and is missing.

The Bulletin reports Friday that Michael Tallman, the former director of a Redmond charter school, was supposed to go to trial Tuesday but police found his ankle bracelet in the Bend area and believe he is planning to flee the state.

The 45-year-old Tallman changed his name from Michael Bremont last year.

He has already served prison time for sexually abusing two female students under the age of 18 at Redmond Proficiency Academy and at Central Linn High School in Halsey, where he worked as a principal until 2006.

Another academy student came forward after his release in 2014 and he was awaiting trial in that case.

Sheriff: Man dies in fall at Mount St. Helens

MOUNT ST. HELENS — Authorities say a 44-year-old Portland man suffered a medical event and died in a fall on Mount St. Helens.

The Skamania County Sheriff's Office said Friday that the man was hiking Thursday with a group of three at about the 6,700-foot (2,042-meter) level in

the Monitor Ridge area when he fell.

Undersheriff Patrick Bond identified the hiker as Jason Douthit of Portland, Oregon.

Bond says he collapsed when he suffered the sudden medical event, which caused him to fall. He injured his head, but it appears the fall didn't cause his death.

Officials say the group of climbers started CPR on the man as a helicopter crew flew to the area. The man was pronounced dead at the scene.

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Our Orthopedics & Sports Medicine provider team and staff will be on hand to support our Mountaineers!

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