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Kansas UAS program tests drones for bridge, tower inspections

The new Kansas Unmanned Aerial Systems program started test flights last Friday to find ways to use drones for bridge and tower inspections.

“Our Aviation and Bridge inspection teams are doing great work in testing drones to enhance the safety of KDOT workers and improve cost efficiencies,” said Acting Transportation Secretary Richard Carlson. “We believe UAS may reduce the need to place our engineers in potentially dangerous situations and we intend to pursue every opportunity that makes them more efficient.”

This is the first of several cooperative efforts KDOT is leading to employ new UAS technologies that increase public safety.

“It’s important we keep safety and personal privacy our top priorities for this program,” said KDOT’s UAS Director Bob Brock. “KDOT inspectors working directly with UAS operators is an exciting first step that we will follow with many more flight tests to ensure we meet the stringent requirements associated with bridge inspection.

“We also believe UAS is an industry that creates new jobs to help Kansas graduates stay in Kansas, so we are working with universities and other state agencies to investigate additional opportunities for engagement that will be announced in the coming months,” he said.

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