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Contact: Patricia Woodside
Director, Public Relations
(703) 396-6304
pwoodside@aurora.aero

Aurora Flight Sciences Partners with Air Force Office of Scientific Research to Develop Autonomous UAV Aerial Recovery Technology

Cambridge, MA, November 19, 2008 – The Air Force Office of Scientific Research has awarded Aurora Flight Sciences a Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Phase 1 contract to begin development of an innovative concept for the aerial recovery of Micro Air Vehicles (MAVs) by larger Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs). Aurora's research partner for this effort is Professor Jonathan How of the Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). This technology could become a key enabler to allow larger UAVs to deploy and retrieve MAVs. Larger vehicles tend to be faster and have longer ranges, whereas MAVs are able to investigate specific areas more closely. Combining the two operational regimes allows for new capabilities to emerge.

Aerial recovery operations between vehicles of greatly differing operational speeds is a challenging technical problem. Most larger UAVs cannot fly slowly enough to match speeds with a MAV, nor can the MAV accelerate to achieve the higher speed of a larger UAV. Aurora has designed an innovative docking system that mitigates this problem and is ideal for autonomous use.

Aurora intends to test the concept at the MIT Real-time Autonomous Vehicle test Environment (RAVEN) Aerospace Controls Laboratory. This facility is equipped with a high-resolution motion capture system that is ideal for characterizing complex three-dimensional motions. The Phase 1 project will culminate in a small-scale indoor demonstration.

About Aurora Flight Sciences

Aurora Flight Sciences designs and builds robotic aircraft and other advanced aerospace vehicles for scientific and military applications. Aurora is headquartered in [Manassas, VA](#) and operates production plants in [Bridgeport, WV](#) and [Columbus, MS](#) and a Research and Development Center in [Cambridge, MA](#). To view recent press releases and more about Aurora please visit our web site at www.aurora.aero.

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