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Aurora Flight Sciences Rolls Out Orion UAS

Columbus, MS, November 22, 2010 - Aurora Flight Sciences today unveiled the Orion unmanned aerial system, a flight vehicle demonstrator that will stay aloft for up to five days. Orion was selected by the US Air Force Research Laboratory in late August to meet the objectives of the Medium Altitude Global ISR and Communications (MAGIC) Joint Capability Technology Demonstration (JCTD).

“Orion was developed under the MAGIC JCTD program to meet CENTCOM’s urgent operational need and deliver this capability rapidly to our nation’s war fighters,” said Aurora CEO John Langford at today’s ceremony.

The MAGIC JCTD is sponsored by US CENTCOM to meet its demands for persistent ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance). The JCTD’s goal is to demonstrate five day flight of the Orion UAS at 20,000 feet with 1,000 pounds of payload. In the JCTD ranking process last year, five US Combatant Commands ranked Orion as their number one priority.

US Senators Thad Cochran and Roger Wicker attended the Orion rollout ceremony today. “We can be proud that Aurora’s facility in Columbus is giving our Armed Forces an unmanned aerial vehicle with the potential for new surveillance capabilities,” said Cochran, vice chairman of the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee. “Aurora has once again demonstrated the innovation and can-do spirit of its Mississippi workforce by producing the first Orion only ninety days after receiving the contract award,” said Wicker. “This will provide help for our troops on an expedited basis.”

“Orion is a model for several of the new acquisition efficiency goals recently announced by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates,” said John Tylko, Aurora’s Vice President for Development. “It uses open system architectures to support a continuous competitive environment. It involves dynamic small businesses in key roles in defense acquisition. It helps restore competition, affordability and productivity in defense spending and it encourages the rapid assimilation of disruptive technologies.”

The Orion vehicle rolled out today will be the first to be flight-tested to demonstrate endurance flights of 120 hours. Orion’s first flight will take place in mid 2011. Orion was developed under the sponsorship of both the US Air Force Research Laboratory and the US Army Space and Missile Defense Command and with Aurora private funding.

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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