

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMERCE, LABOR AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Mark Hutton at 1:30 pm on Wednesday, January 20, 2016, 346-S of the Capitol.

All members were present

Committee staff present:

Linda Herrick, Kansas Legislative Committee Assistant
Reed Holwegner, Legislative Research Department
Chris Courtwright, Legislative Research Department
Chuck Reimer, Office of Revisor of Statutes

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

John Ferguson, CEO, SkyNet UAV's
Tom Aldag, WSU, NIAR
Tiffany Brown, Aviation Director, Kansas Dept. of Transportation

Others in attendance:

[See Attached List](#)

Possible bill introductions

Chairperson Hutton asked if there were any bills to be introduced. There were none.

Presentation on: Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Industry in Kansas

Vice-Chairperson Mason requested this informational presentation because this is an opportunity to capitalize on the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) industry which has unlimited growth. He added that the question is how the industry can be capitalized in the state.

Representative Claeys, noting the unprecedented opportunity in the field of UAV's, expressed pride in Kansas' role in aviation. Salina was the first to have FAA certification and the first to do commercial training in unmanned aerial vehicles. He would like to see how the UAV industry can be expanded in Kansas.

John Ferguson, CEO, SkyNet UAV's, gave a presentation ([Attachment 1](#)) on developing the UAV industry in Kansas. Mr. Ferguson is also a representative of the Consortium of Kansas Unmanned Systems (CKUS). He asked for help from the Legislature to make Kansas a leader, much like it is for the current aircraft industry, by allowing more latitude to work in Kansas under FAA regulations for qualified companies; streamline the process for students to attend academic programs; and to develop legislative bills to aid in streamlining first responders to utilize UAV technology. Senator Moran has met with the FAA to discuss UAV's in our national airspace and Kansas State University's development

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of UAV technology.

Mr. Ferguson indicated that nationally, Unmanned Vehicle Systems (UAS) could create 100,000 jobs by the year 2025 with the industry growing possibly to over \$80 billion. Kansas has the potential to realize approximately \$3 billion in revenue. UAV's can be used for agriculture, first responders, education research and development, and commercial and private industry. In the Economic Benefits of UAS Integration in National Airspace report, Kansas is ranked 7th in the top ten states predicted to see growth in the industry. The report also predicts the greatest area of growth to be in precision agriculture.

Tom Aldag, Director of the National Institute for Aviation Research (NIAR) program at Wichita State University gave the second portion of the presentation of Attachment 1. UAS has grown at the Kansas State University-Salina, Wichita, and at KU. Last summer, Wichita State, along with KSU and KU, became part of FAA Assure Center of Excellence. When FAA does UAV research, the Center of Excellence participants are contacted and perform the work which is FAA funded. NIAR forecasts between industry and FAA, there will be \$20 million in research across the three universities. Mr. Aldag added that in 2013, a major meeting on UAS was held in Manhattan and it was determined that academia, government, and industry must be involved. He noted Kansas has everything needed to build the UAS industry and make it grow.

Tiffany Brown, Aviation Director, Kansas Department of Transportation gave a presentation ([Attachment 2](#)). All of her staff has background in airports, and all are pilots. Ms. Brown is a certified flight instructor and her education is in airport engineering. In 2015, workshops were held in Hutchinson, Salina, Manhattan, and Wichita to explore important areas in which UAS equipment can provide a benefit: agriculture, emergency management, small business, research and survey.

From these meetings, it was determined there was great individual effort across the state, but to get a collective voice, a UAS Summit was held in October 2015. A beginner session was held on "What you need to know before you drone." She added FAA is now requiring hobbyists to register as UAS operators to fly in national air space. The Division of Aviation has continued to keep persons informed both from the hobby side and the commercial side. Legislators attending some of those meetings indicated interested parties need to come to the Legislature with one voice to tell what they want, since this is a federal issue dealing with FAA requirements.

The presenters responded to questions. It was asked if it would be helpful to have a state liaison, maybe at the Department of Commerce level. Mr. Ferguson indicated that it would be.

Written comments were received from LeEtta Felter, Olathe ([Attachment 3](#)) concerning privacy and safety issues with UAV's.

Adjournment

Unless specifically noted, the individual remarks recorded herein have not been transcribed verbatim. Individual remarks as reported herein have not been submitted to the individuals appearing before the committee for editing or corrections.

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The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

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