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Governor Northam Announces Silent Falcon UAS Technologies to Locate East Coast Operations in Warren County, Creating 249 New Jobs

Company to invest \$6 million in new Mid-Atlantic headquarters for research, development, manufacturing

RICHMOND—Governor Ralph Northam today announced that Silent Falcon UAS Technologies, an unmanned aircraft systems service provider and original equipment manufacturer, will invest \$6 million to locate its new East Coast headquarters for research, development, and manufacturing at the Front Royal-Warren County Airport in Warren County. Virginia successfully competed with Massachusetts and New Jersey for the project, which will create 249 new jobs.

“Silent Falcon UAS Technologies’ decision to establish its East Coast operations in Warren County and create a new workforce development partnership speaks volumes to Virginia’s leadership in the fast-growing unmanned systems industry,” **said Governor Northam**. “With one of the nation’s largest transportation networks, an unmatched talent pipeline, and competitive operating costs, the Commonwealth is an ideal location for the company to reach its expanding customer base. This project is a major win for the Northern Shenandoah Valley, and we are thrilled to welcome the company to Virginia.”

Silent Falcon UAS Technologies manufactures patent-pending, state-of-the-art unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) components and sensors for security, military, and commercial markets, including oil and gas and pipeline inspections, power utility inspections, large-scale agriculture, natural resource management, security/ISR, public safety, and mapping/surveying. Silent Falcon is the only solar electric UAS to provide long endurance and range, silent operations, and an open interface payload bay, accommodating a wide variety of payloads that are also quick and easy to change. Silent Falcon’s decision to locate in Virginia coincides with a significant expansion of the service portion of the company’s business, which focuses on data collection, specifically for runway inspections at airports.

“We’re proud to partner with companies like Silent Falcon UAS Technologies, which support industry growth and high quality job creation in the Commonwealth,” **said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Brian Ball**. “The unmanned systems sector is rapidly evolving, and Virginia’s top-ranked education system, combined with our research and development assets, will provide the company with a strong foundation for success. We thank Silent Falcon for creating 249 high-tech jobs in Warren County, and look forward to building a lasting partnership.”

Randolph-Macon Academy’s Unmanned Systems Lab (R-MA) will partner with Silent Falcon as part of its pre-professional pathway initiative through the R-MA drone program, which provides students with the tools and real-life experience to leverage the potential of unmanned technology in a range of career fields. This out-of-the-classroom learning opportunity allows students to experience first-hand how drones and drone-collected data can be applied to real-world community management, business, environmental, and economic challenges. R-MA will work with Silent Falcon to design new program curricula to prepare students for the next generation of Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) operations, while crafting data acquisition and data analysis solutions using artificial intelligence.

“We are excited to work with Silent Falcon UAS Technologies, a company committed to innovation, environmental sustainability, and workforce development,” **said Secretary of Transportation Shannon Valentine**. “Whether launching UAS from our airport runways or using them for infrastructure assessment, further integrating UAS into Virginia’s multimodal transportation system will prepare us for a strong economic future.”

“We are excited to be opening our operations and manufacturing center in Front Royal,” **said Grant Bishop, CEO of Silent**

Falcon UAS Technologies. “The Virginia Economic Development Partnership was just that, a partnership, and they couldn’t have been more persuasive in helping us choose Warren County for our new facility. We’d like to thank Governor Northam and the officials in Warren County for their leadership and support for making this possible. The small, business-friendly atmosphere and the availability of a great workforce were real selling points. In addition, we are particularly excited about collaborating with the Randolph-Macon Academy and its innovative UAS program under the leadership of General Wesley, which has been at the forefront of training future UAS pilots and specialists. We look forward to being of assistance to their efforts and to having their input into our future development.”

The Virginia Economic Development Partnership worked with Warren County, the Virginia Department of Aviation, and the Center for Innovative Technology to secure the project for Virginia. Governor Northam approved a \$161,482 grant from the Commonwealth’s Opportunity Fund to assist Warren County with the project. The company is eligible to receive benefits from the Major Business Facility Job Tax Credit for new, full-time jobs created. Funding and services to support Silent Falcon UAS Technologies’ employee training activities will be provided through the Virginia Jobs Investment Program.

“We want to thank Silent Falcon UAS Technologies for its investment in Warren County. We look forward to a thriving partnership with this growing company at the forefront of this exciting new technology,” **said Jeff Browne, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Front Royal-Warren County Economic Development Authority.** “This project was the result of successful collaboration with Warren County, the Airport Commission, and the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, among others. We’re excited to help bring this high-tech industry to our community.”

“We are really excited that Silent Falcon has chosen to build its future in Virginia,” **said Bob Stolle, CEO at the Center for Innovative Technology (CIT).** “They are pioneers in this young industry that will soon impact every aspect of our lives, and the Unmanned Systems Center at CIT is anxious to support them in that pursuit.”

“Randolph-Macon Academy’s goal was to create a nationally-recognized and accredited UAS flight training and drone applications program serving as a direct pipeline to industry career opportunities, as well as a pathway to emerging four-year university UAS programs,” **said Brian Kelly, Director of Unmanned Flight Operations at the Randolph-Macon Academy.** “Thanks to our early investment in this industry and the support of partners like Silent Falcon, R-MA is positioned to become the leading high school UAS program in the country. Silent Falcon’s investment in Front Royal will do great things for Warren County and the region as a center for cutting-edge innovation, and we are excited about the opportunities created by this strategic partnership.”

“I commend Silent Falcon UAS for choosing to make such a major economic investment in the Shenandoah Valley,” **said Senator Mark Obenshain.** “Silent Falcon UAS Technologies has worked in partnership with the Commonwealth and Warren County, and we welcome these new job opportunities for our citizens.”

“Thanks to Silent Falcon UAS Technologies, in partnership with Warren County and the Commonwealth, we have an innovative business providing more job opportunities for our citizens,” **said Delegate Todd Gilbert.** “Silent Falcon UAS Technologies is to be commended for its economic investment in the Shenandoah Valley.”

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