



INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION OF NORTH DAKOTA

Jack Dalrymple
Governor

Wayne Stenehjem
Attorney General

Doug Goehring
Agriculture Commissioner

NEWS

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Industrial Commission awards \$500,000 grant for solar UAS project

BISMARCK – The North Dakota Industrial Commission today awarded a \$500,000 grant from the North Dakota Renewable Energy Program to Packet Digital for a project to better use solar energy in unmanned aircraft systems (UAS).

“This is an exciting project that furthers our goals of being a leader in UAS development and at the same time identifying opportunities for renewable energy,” commission members said in a joint statement.

The project will focus on harnessing solar energy more efficiently to double fly times and ultimately provide unlimited endurance to low-altitude UAS. This is the first stage of a multi-phase project. North Dakota is one of six Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) UAS test sites conducting research to determine how to best integrate UAS into the national airspace. The FAA certified the Northern Plains UAS Test Site as the first site ready for operations in April 2014.

“Packet Digital is pleased to be working on this Renewable Energy Council project for Unmanned Aerial Systems to initially double fly times and ultimately provide unlimited endurance powered by solar energy,” said Terri Zimmerman, CEO, Packet Digital. “Harnessing renewable solar energy and incorporating auto-soaring technology with Packet Digital’s power management algorithms to power these unmanned aircraft will lead to practical applications in agriculture, pipeline management, emergency response and much more.” Founded in 2003 and headquartered in Fargo, ND, Packet Digital designs, develops and markets advanced power management solutions for portable electronic devices and embedded systems.

The total cost for phase one is \$1,010,000. Partnering with Packet Digital on this project is the U.S. Naval Research Lab (NRL). Match funding of \$250,000 comes from Packet Digital and \$260,000 comes from NRL.

The Industrial Commission is chaired by Gov. Jack Dalrymple and includes Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem and Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring. The commission oversees the North Dakota Renewable Energy Program.

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