HAWK30 Takes Flight - AeroVironment Achieves Successful First Test Flight of Next Generation Solar HAPS Unmanned Aircraft System

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- Successful first test flight takes place less than two years after program start
- Test program to expand operating envelope with sequentially higher and longer flights

SIMI VALLEY, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Sep. 16, 2019-- AeroVironment, Inc. (NASDAQ:AVAV), a global leader in Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) for both defense and commercial applications, announced the successful first flight of the HAWK30 solar HAPS unmanned aircraft system on September 11, 2019 at the NASA Armstrong Flight Research Center in California. AeroVironment partnered with SoftBank Corp (TOKYO:9434) to create HAPSMobile Inc., the joint venture funding HAWK30 design development and demonstration.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here: https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20190916005306/en/

HAWK30 solar HAPS unmanned aircraft system takes flight for the first time at NASA Armstrong Flight Research Center in California (Photo: Business Wire)

"The first flight of HAWK30 builds on more than two decades of pioneering HAPS technology development and demonstration by the AeroVironment team, and comes only two years since SoftBank joined us in this endeavor," said Wahid Nawabi, AeroVironment president and chief executive officer. "We are the pioneer and leader in HAPS, delivering continued progress and demonstrated success. We look forward to achieving even greater success in flight testing, culminating in high-altitude, long-endurance flight demonstrations that will pave the way for the global commercialization of HAPS technology.

"We are grateful for the expertise and support from NASA's outstanding team at the Armstrong Flight Research Center. We are proud to add another milestone to their storied history of aviation innovation," Nawabi added.

Developed and assembled in AeroVironment's HAPS Innovation Center, the HAWK30 has a wingspan of approximately 260 feet and is propelled by 10 electric motors powered by solar panels covering the surface of the wing, resulting in zero emissions. Flying at an altitude of approximately 65,000 feet above sea level and above the clouds, the HAWK30 is designed for continuous, extended missions of up to months without landing.

AeroVironment seeks to create value from its unique HAPS intellectual property and capabilities in multiple ways: participating in the anticipated growth of the HAPSMobile joint venture as one of its two owners; generating customer-funded research and development revenue as the exclusive developer of solar HAPS for HAPSMobile through the design, development and demonstration phases of the program; manufacturing and supplying HAPS UAS to HAPSMobile; supporting and maintaining a deployed fleet of HAPS systems; and marketing and selling HAPS UAS to non-commercial customers globally, with the exception of Japan.

AeroVironment pioneered the concept of high-altitude solar-powered UAS in the 1980s, and developed and demonstrated multiple systems for NASA's Environmental Research Aircraft and Sensor Technology, or ERAST program, in the late 1990s and early 2000s. In August 2001, the AeroVironment Helios prototype reached an altitude of 96,863 feet, setting the world-record for sustained horizontal flight by a winged aircraft. In 2002, the AeroVironment Pathfinder Plus prototype performed the world's first UAS telecommunications demonstrations at 65,000 feet by providing high-definition television (HDTV) signals, third-generation (3G) mobile voice, video and data and high-speed internet connectivity.

About AeroVironment, Inc.

AeroVironment (NASDAQ: AVAV) provides customers with more actionable intelligence so they can proceed with certainty. Based in California, AeroVironment is a global leader in unmanned aircraft systems and tactical missile systems, and serves defense, government, and commercial customers. For more information visit www.avinc.com.

Safe Harbor Statement

Certain statements in this press release may constitute "forward-looking statements" as that term is defined in the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These statements are made on the basis of current expectations, forecasts and assumptions that involve risks and uncertainties, including, but not limited to, economic, competitive, governmental and technological factors outside of our control, that may cause our business, strategy or actual results to differ materially from those expressed or implied. Factors that could cause actual results to differ materially from the forward-looking statements include, but are not limited to, our ability to perform under existing contracts and obtain additional contracts; changes in the regulatory environment; the activities of competitors; failure of the markets in which we operate to grow; failure to expand into new markets; failure to develop new products or integrate new technology with current products; and general economic and business conditions in the United States and elsewhere in the world. For a further list and description of such risks and uncertainties, see the reports we file with the Securities and Exchange Commission. We do not intend, and undertake no obligation, to update any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise.

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