AV's LOCUST Demonstrates Landmark Capability at White Sands with JIATF-401 and FAA

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Coordinated test confirms safe, controlled laser engagement of drone targets in complex national airspace

ARLINGTON, Va.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--May 6, 2026-- AeroVironment, Inc. ("AV") (NASDAQ: AVAV) today announced a historic milestone for directed energy and homeland defense following the successful execution of a first-of-its-kind counter-unmanned aircraft system (C-UAS) laser test in coordination with the U.S. Department of War and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here: https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20260506975335/en/

AV's LOCUST® high-energy laser system undergoes testing at White Sands Missile Range, demonstrating safe, precise counter-drone capability in coordination with DOW–FAA national airspace validation efforts. (Photo Courtesy of the U.S. Army).

During an early March test event at White Sands Missile Range (WSMR), led by Joint Interagency Task Force 401 (JIATF-401), AV's LOCUST ® high-energy laser system demonstrated its ability to safely and effectively defend U.S. national airspace against emerging drone threats, directly supporting a subsequent agreement between the DOW and FAA that validates the system for domestic use.

"This is a defining moment for directed energy and for the future of homeland defense," said John Garrity, Vice President for Directed Energy Systems at AV. "LOCUST has now proven its ability to operate safely and effectively in the most complex airspace environment in the world. This achievement accelerates the transition of directed energy from experimentation to operational deployment—delivering a scalable, cost-effective solution to counter the rapidly growing drone threat."

The test at WSMR demonstrated automated safety shut-off capabilities that ensure the system only engages validated targets, among other safety features. The testing also showed no adverse impact to civilian aircraft during controlled evaluation scenarios and showed precision engagement through strict positive identification protocols.

AV's LOCUST also showed the ability to hit both stationary and airborne targets to demonstrate accuracy, persistence, and operational realism.

"This successful test showcases the significant advancements we're making in counter-drone technology to ensure that our warfighters have the most advanced tools to defend the homeland," U.S. Army Brigadier General Matt Ross, director of JIATF-401 said recently in a joint Press Release. "By working hand-in-hand with the FAA and our interagency partners, the Department of War is proving that these cutting-edge capabilities are safe, effective, and ready to protect all air travelers from illicit drone use in the national airspace."

The demonstration at WSMR comes amid increasing urgency to address drone incursions across U.S. airspace. The successful validation of LOCUST underscores its role as a critical layer in a modern, integrated air defense architecture—providing precision engagement, deep magazine capacity, and the ability to defeat threats at the speed of light.

"The FAA's top priority is protecting the safety of the American flying public, and we value the collaboration with the Department of War in that effort," FAA Administrator Bryan Bedford said in the release. "Following a thorough, data-informed Safety Risk Assessment, we determined that these systems do not present an increased risk to the flying public. We will continue working with our interagency partners to ensure the National Airspace System remains safe while addressing emerging drone threats."

AV recently announced LOCUST as a key offering in its new rollout of Halo_Shield™, —a layered, tile-based defense architecture that integrates sensors, battle management, and effectors to identify, detect, track, and defeat evolving aerial threats—positioning the company to help defend critical infrastructure, secure borders, and protect the American public as drone incursions continue to rise across U.S. airspace.

"JIATF-401's coordination across federal partners was instrumental in aligning operational, safety and regulatory stakeholders for this unprecedented test," said Mary Clum, President of Space, Cyber and Directed Energy at AV. "PEO Missiles & Space – PAE Fires continues to drive directed energy innovation and fielding, while the FAA's rigorous safety oversight is enabling the responsible integration of these capabilities into national airspace."

About AV

AeroVironment ("AV") (NASDAQ: AVAV) is a defense technology leader delivering integrated capabilities across air, land, sea, space, and cyber. The Company develops and deploys autonomous systems, loitering munitions, counter-UAS technologies, space-based platforms, directed energy systems, and cyber and electronic warfare capabilities—built to meet the mission needs of today's warfighter and tomorrow's conflicts. At the core of these technologies lies AV_Halo™, a modular, mission-ready suite of AI-powered software tools that empowers warfighters and enables full-battlefield dominance: detect, decide, deliver. With a national manufacturing footprint and a deep innovation pipeline, AV delivers proven systems and future-defining capabilities at speed, scale, and operational relevance. For more information, visit www.avinc.com.

Safe Harbor Statement

Certain statements in this press release may constitute "forward-looking statements" as defined in the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These statements are based on current expectations, forecasts, and assumptions that involve risks and uncertainties, which could cause actual results to differ materially. Factors that may cause such differences include, but are not limited to, our ability to perform under existing contracts and obtain new ones; regulatory changes; competitor activities; market growth; product development challenges; and general economic conditions. For a more detailed discussion of these risks, please refer to AeroVironment's filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission. We undertake no

obligation to update forward-looking statements as a result of new information or future events.

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