



AV's LOCUST® Selected for Nearly \$500 million Army Counter-UAS Contract for Enduring-High Energy Laser (E-HEL) Program

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AV's proven LOCUST® family of laser weapons will anchor E-HEL Army program

ARLINGTON, Va.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Sep. 2, 2026-- AeroVironment, Inc. ("AV") (NASDAQ: AVAV), a global leader in proven autonomous and counter-drone systems, today announced it has been awarded a landmark contract valued at \$464.8 million by the U.S. Army Portfolio Acquisition Executive for Fires (PAE Fires) program office for the Enduring-High Energy Laser (E-HEL) program.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20260818921666/en/>



AV's LOCUST® selected for \$464.8 million counter-UAS contract award by the U.S. Army. The award represents the first-ever procurement for directed energy systems in United States history, signaling a historic transition from prototype to production for laser weapon systems. (Rendering for illustrative purposes only.)

This award represents the first-ever production contract for directed energy systems in United States history, signaling a historic transition from prototype to production for laser weapon systems.

"This award marks a defining moment not only for AV, but for the future of modern defense," said Wahid Nawabi, Chairman, President, and Chief Executive Officer at AV. "The transition of directed energy from

experimentation to an enduring, fielded capability reflects years of collaboration, innovation, and operational success alongside the U.S. Army. We are proud to deliver these production systems and support the Army's mission with scalable, modular, and cost-effective defense solutions."

Under this Other Transaction Agreement (OTA), AV will deliver dozens of [LOCUST® X3 laser weapon systems](#) over the next few years in support of multi-year fielding requirements, advancing the Army's layered air defense capabilities against group 1-3 unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) while also solidifying directed energy as a cornerstone of future battlefield operations.

AV's LOCUST X3, a 30-kilowatt platform-agnostic system, will be integrated with various platforms such as the Army's Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV), with options for palletized configurations, while analyzing the potential to integrate on an Infantry Squad Vehicle (ISV) in the near future. As part of the program, AV will also provide ongoing system support and training.

The E-HEL program builds upon the success of the [Army Multi-Purpose High Energy Laser \(AMP-HEL\) prototypes](#) currently in use by the Army.

The contract follows LOCUST's successful testing at [White Sands Missile Range](#), led by Joint Interagency Task Force 401 (JIATF-401) and PAE Fires, which demonstrated safe, effective counter-drone operations in U.S. airspace and directly enabled a [DOW-FAA safety agreement](#) validating the system for domestic use.

By entering production, the E-HEL program enables the Army to field a sustainable, scalable, and cost-effective solution against UAS. The ramp up in production will be supported by a \$30 million investment in AV's Albuquerque, NM facility that [was announced in March of 2026](#).

"This program represents the culmination of years of operational lessons learned and rapid prototyping," said John Garrity, Vice President of Directed Energy Systems at AV. "E-HEL is not a future capability, it is a production-ready system, built on proven technology, and designed to meet the demands of today's fight while scaling for tomorrow's threats."

The award further reinforces AV's leadership in directed energy and its role as a trusted partner to the U.S. Department of War. The company's platform-agnostic approach enables integration across multiple mission sets and platforms, ensuring flexibility and rapid deployment in diverse operational environments.

As the Army transitions to procurement at scale, the E-HEL program establishes a foundation for sustained production, innovation, and fielding of next-generation laser weapon systems, delivering capability "at the speed of light."

About LOCUST®

AV's LOCUST family of directed energy systems represents a breakthrough in counter-UAS defense, delivering precise, scalable, and cost-effective protection against evolving aerial threats. Its performance was recently featured on CBS News' *60 Minutes*, underscoring its growing relevance in modern defense and broader adoption. LOCUST was also successfully demonstrated aboard the [U.S. Navy's USS George H.W. Bush](#). The system was also validated in joint testing with JIATF-401 at White Sands Missile Range, a demonstration that informed Department of War and Federal Aviation Administration coordination on the safe use of lasers in domestic airspace. The latest evolution, LOCUST X3, introduces enhanced power, modularity, and [AV_Halo™](#) AI-driven targeting and serves as a key effector within [AV's Halo_Shield™](#) architecture.

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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