



AeroVironment's Stratospheric Global Observer Unmanned Aircraft System Makes First Flight

Flight Test Campaign Begins for First Unmanned Aircraft System Developed to Provide Uninterrupted Coverage Over Any Spot on the Globe

EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE, Calif., Aug 16, 2010 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- [AeroVironment, Inc.](#) (AV) (NASDAQ:AVAV) announced that the first aircraft developed under the [Global Observer](#)(TM) Joint Capability Technology Demonstration (JCTD) program successfully completed its first flight. On August 5 Global Observer Aircraft 1001 took off from runway 04L at [Edwards Air Force Base](#) (EAFB) in California and climbed to an altitude of 4,000 feet where it performed a series of maneuvers before landing successfully one hour later.

AeroVironment's chief test pilot, Andy Thurling, a retired U.S. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel and former USAF flight test pilot, operated the aircraft remotely from the portable Launch and Recovery Element (LRE). Thurling successfully guided the aircraft through a pre-determined flight path as the first step in a flight test campaign that will gradually demonstrate increasing flight endurance and operating altitude.

The hybrid-electric aircraft flew for the first time under battery power and will ultimately carry a liquid hydrogen-fueled propulsion system to power it through high altitude, long endurance joint operational utility assessment planned for later in 2010. When flying in its battery-powered test configuration or in its liquid hydrogen-fueled operational configuration the air vehicle's propulsion system produces no carbon emissions.

"This flight marks the beginning of an exciting new phase in the Global Observer technology demonstration program, and it represents a significant leap forward in the evolution of airborne communications and sensor platforms," said Tim Conner, AV's chairman and chief executive officer. "In the 20th century conventional airplanes opened the lower atmosphere to practical use, and satellites did the same for space. I believe that Global Observer soon will establish the stratosphere as a valuable and practical area of operation."

Each aircraft in a Global Observer system is designed to fly at an altitude of between 55,000 and 65,000 feet for 5 to 7 days. In addition to flying above weather and above other conventional aircraft, operation in this altitude regime permits communications and sensor payloads on the aircraft to service an area on the surface of the earth up to 600 miles in diameter, equivalent to more than 280,000 square miles of coverage. Equipped with payloads that are readily available today, two Global Observer aircraft would alternate coverage over any location on the globe every 5 to 7 days, making this the first solution to provide customers with practical, seamless coverage, wherever and whenever required.

The joint test team is preparing communications and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) payloads for aircraft integration. Once development flight tests are complete, payloads will be installed and joint operational utility flight demonstrations will be performed at EAFB.

Global Observer is designed to address the need for affordable, persistent coverage and to offer a means to satisfy high value military and non-military applications. The system is intended to provide mission capabilities that include persistent communications relay, robust observation over areas with little or no existing coverage, the ability to relocate the system as required by theater commanders, dedicated communications support to other unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) and tactical on-station weather monitoring and data support.

About Global Observer

With 20 years of experience developing high altitude, long-endurance UAS, AV is developing Global Observer to operate as a "stratospheric geosynchronous satellite system" with regional coverage and no signal delay. Two Global Observer aircraft, each flying for up to a week at a time, will alternate coverage over any area on the earth, providing a seamless, persistent platform for high value missions such as communications relay, remote sensing, long-term surveillance and disaster recovery. Offering greater flexibility than a satellite and significantly longer duration than conventional manned and unmanned aircraft, Global Observer is designed to provide critical new capabilities in a reliable and more affordable manner, all while consuming

no fossil fuels and emitting no carbon emissions.

About AeroVironment, Inc. (AV)

AV is a technology company that designs, develops, produces and supports an advanced portfolio of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) and efficient electric energy systems. Agencies of the U.S. Department of Defense and allied military services use the company's battery-powered, [hand-launched UAS](#) to provide situational awareness to tactical operating units through real-time, airborne reconnaissance, surveillance and target acquisition. AV's electric transportation solutions include [electric vehicle \(EV\) home charging, public charging and fast charging systems](#) for consumers, automakers, utilities and government agencies, [power cycling and test systems](#) for EV developers and [industrial electric vehicle charging systems](#) for commercial fleets. More information about AV is available at www.avinc.com.

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