



DIVISION OF
AVIATION

Aviation Updates

NC Association of Rural Planning Organizations

Jason Schronce

Deputy Director, Programs and Innovations

NCDOT Division of Aviation

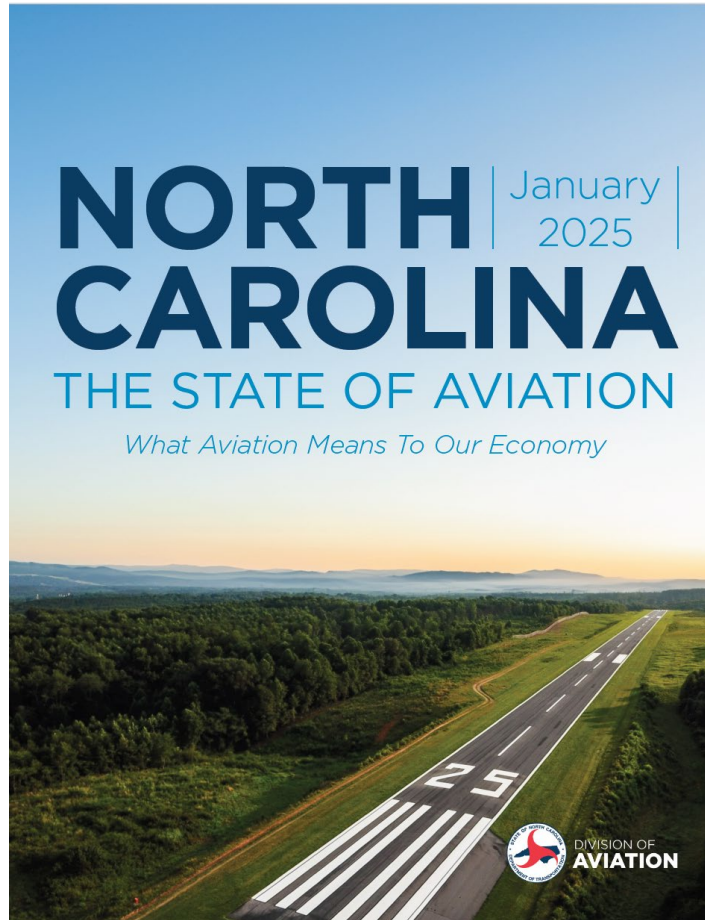
July 30, 2026

Connecting people, products and places safely and efficiently with customer focus, accountability and environmental sensitivity to enhance the economy and vitality of North Carolina



**Here to show that
I've always been
into Aviation!**

2025 North Carolina: The State of Aviation



Key Findings:

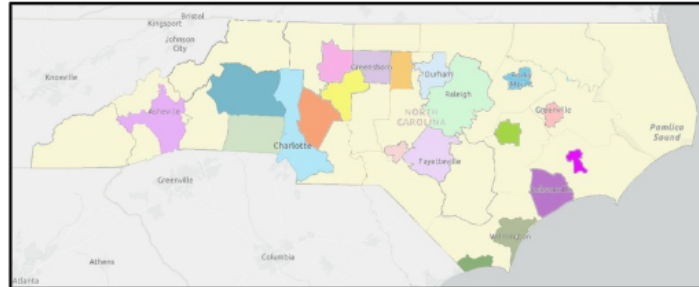
- \$88+ Billion N.C. Airport Economic Impact Annually
- ~ 11% of North Carolina's GDP



Next Report Released in January 2027!!



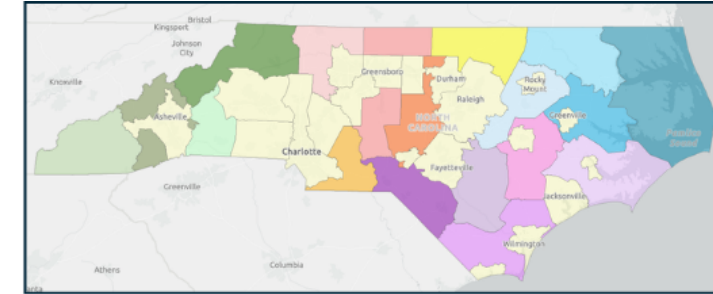
Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and North Carolina Airports



MPO	Airport Code and Name	MPO	Airport Code and Name
Burlington-Graham	BUY Burlington-Alamance	Greater Hickory	HKY Hickory Regional Airport MRN Foothills Regional Airport
Cabarrus-Rowan	JQF Concord-Padgett Regional RUQ Mid-Carolina Regional Airport	Greensboro Urban Area	GSO Piedmont Triad Int'l
Capital Area	HRJ Harnett Regional Jetport LHZ Triangle North Executive RDU Raleigh-Durham International	Greenville Urban Area	PGV Pitt-Greenville Airport
Charlotte Regional TPO	EQY Charlotte-Monroe Executive SVH Statesville Regional CLT Charlotte Douglas	High Point Urban Area	EXX Davidson County Executive
Fayetteville Area	FAY Fayetteville Regional	Jacksonville Urban Area	OAJ Albert J Ellis Airport
French Broad River	AVL Asheville Regional Airport	New Bern	EWN Coastal Carolina Regional
Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln	AKH Gastonia Municipal Airport EHO Shelby-Cleveland County IPJ Lincolnton-Lincoln County	Rocky Mount Urban Area	RWI Rocky Mount-Wilson
Goldsboro	GWW Wayne Executive Jetport	Sandhills	SOP Moore County Airport
Grand Strand Area	60J Odell Williamson Municipal	Triangle West	No airports
		Wilmington Urban Area	ILM Wilmington International
		Winston-Salem Area TPO	INT Smith Reynolds Airport



Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs) and North Carolina Airports



RPO	Airport Code and Name	RPO	Airport Code and Name
	7W6 Hyde County	Land-of-Sky	No airports
	ECG Elizabeth City CG Air Station		
	EDE Northeastern Regional	Lumber River	LBT Lumberton Regional MEB Laurinburg-Maxton RCZ Richmond County
	FFA First Flight		
Albemarle	HSE Billy Mitchell MQI Dare County Regional ONX Currituck County Regional PMZ Plymouth Municipal W95 Ocracoke Island	Mid-Carolina	CTZ Clinton-Sampson County EYF Curtis L. Brown Jr. Field
Cape Fear	CPC Columbus County Municipal SUT Cape Fear Regional Jetport ACZ Wallace-Pender	Mid-East	OCW Washington-Warren MCZ Martin County
Central Pines	SCR Siler City Municipal TTA Raleigh Executive Jetport	Northwest Piedmont	MWK Mount Airy/Surry County ZEF Elkin Municipal
Down East	MRH Michael J. Smith Field	Peanut Belt	ASJ Tri-County IXA Halifax-Northampton
Eastern Carolina	DPL Duplin County ISO Kinston Regional Jetport W40 Mount Olive Municipal	Piedmont Triad	HBI Asheboro Regional SIF Rockingham County 43A Montgomery County
Foothills	FQD Rutherford County	Rocky River	AFP Anson County Airport VUJ Stanly County
High Country	GEV Ashe County UKF Wilkes County 7A8 Avery County/Morrison Field	Southwestern	1A5 Macon County 24A Jackson County RHP Western Carolina
Kerr-Tar	HNZ Henderson-Oxford TDF Raleigh Regional—Person Cnty	Upper Coastal Plain	ETC Tarboro-Edgecombe JNX Johnston Regional



Division of Aviation Staff

Leadership



Nick Short
Director
Division of Aviation



Jason Schronce
Deputy Director
Programs and Innovations



Thad Howell
Deputy Director
Flight Operations and
Airport Affairs

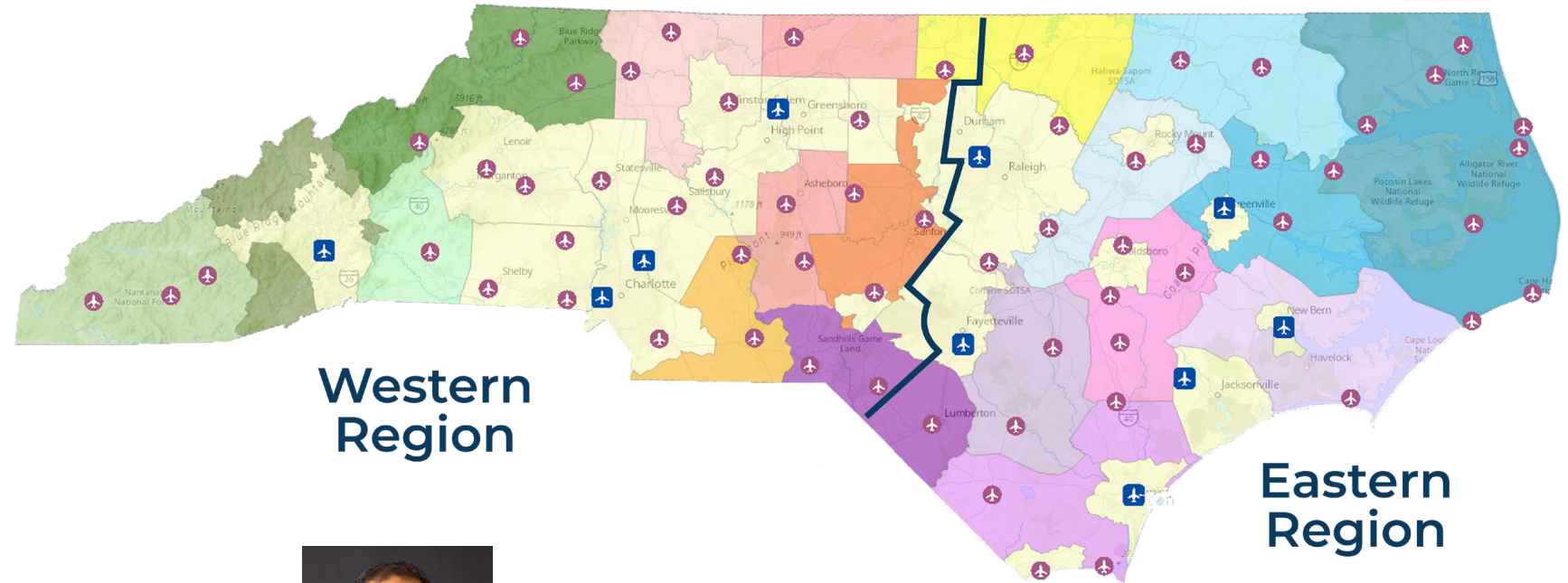


Jonathan Mauldin
Interim Deputy Director
Airport Development

North Carolina General Aviation Airports and Planning Organizations

Airport Project Managers: Your go-to resource for airport development

- Primary contact for airports
- Annual planning
- Project meetings
- Mini “FAA Airports District Office”



Raj Kondapalli
Western Region
Lead



Tommy Mann
Eastern Region
Lead

APMs: Your go-to resource for airport development

- Primary contact for airports
- Annual planning
- Project meetings
- Mini “FAA Airports District Office”



Raj Kondapalli
Western Region
Lead



Tom DeAveiro
Senior APM



Mortaza Habibi
Senior APM



Philip "Mac" McAlpin
APM



Tommy Mann
Eastern Region
Lead



Nick Harrington
Senior APM



Stephen Odom
Senior APM



Ali Craft
APM

Resources and Things to Know

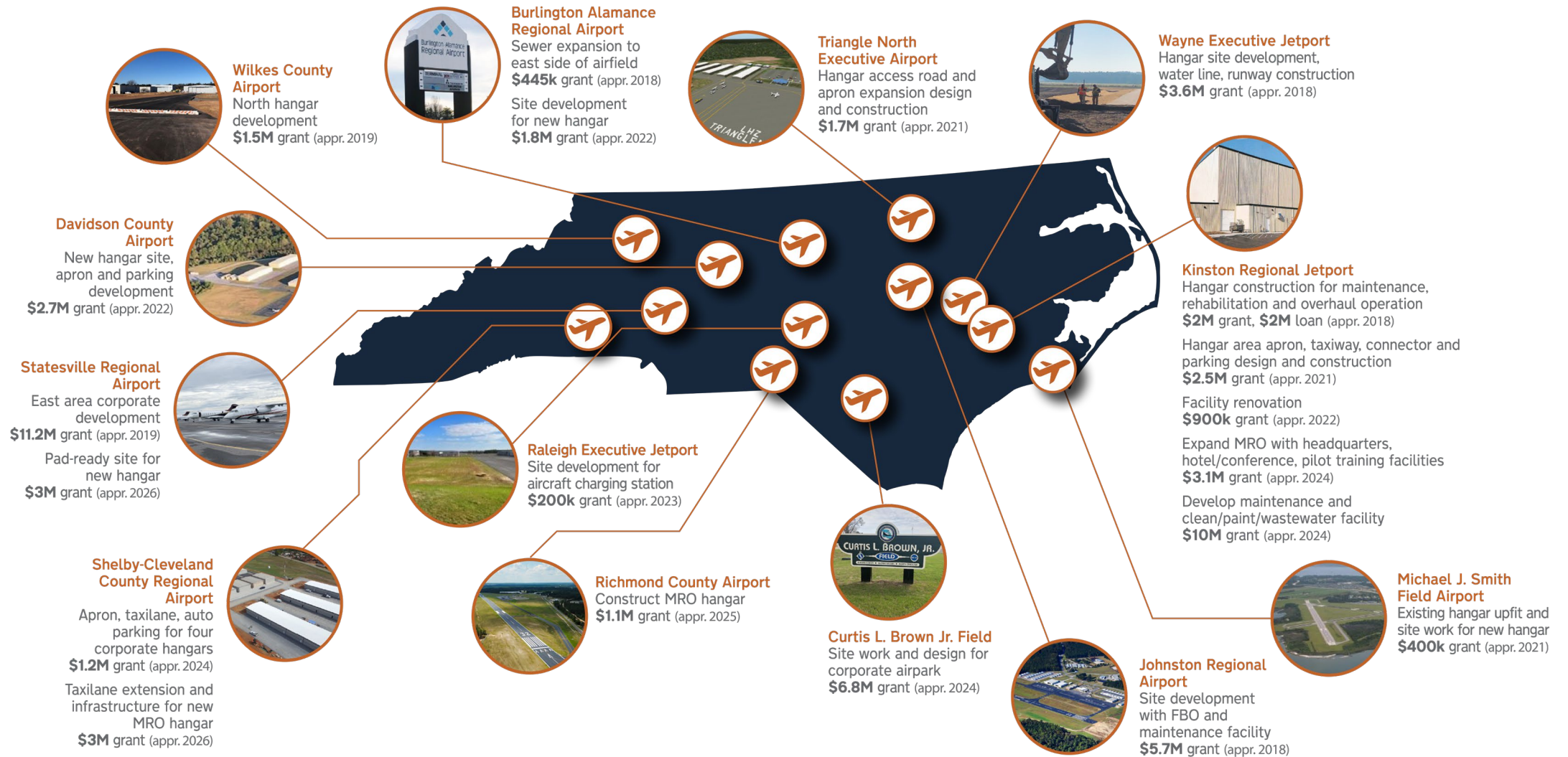
Airport Board Member Training



Register here

All 10 ABMT modules online
Great for new staff orientation, too!

- Airport Board Organization
- Airport Facilities & Equipment
- Airport Rules & Regulations
- NCDOT Programs & Airport Resources
- Financing, Budget & Procurement
- And more!



Disaster Prep and Response: Division of Aviation



2026 NCDOT UAS HURRICANE RESPONSE TRAINING

DAY 1 | JUNE 3 DENNIS WICKER CIVIC CENTER
1801 Nash Street, Sanford, NC 27330

- 9:00 AM Welcome (Riley Beaman & Tom Walls)
- 9:30 AM NC Emergency Management (Patrick Riley)
- 10:00 AM Location & Surveys Presentation (Joel Gullledge & David Langston)
- 11:00 AM The Eye of The Storm (Seth Swam)
- 12:00 PM - 12:00 PM **LUNCH**
- 1:00 PM Skydio X10 vs. DJI (Cole Martz)
- 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM Data Processing & Transfer (Jaimie Cramer)

DAY 2 | JUNE 4 CENTRAL CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
EMERGENCY SERVICES TRAINING CENTER
3000 Airport Road, Sanford, NC 27332

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

HANDS-ON FLIGHT TRAINING & INSTRUCTION

- FLIGHT OPERATIONS
- MISSION PLANNING
- DATA COLLECTION

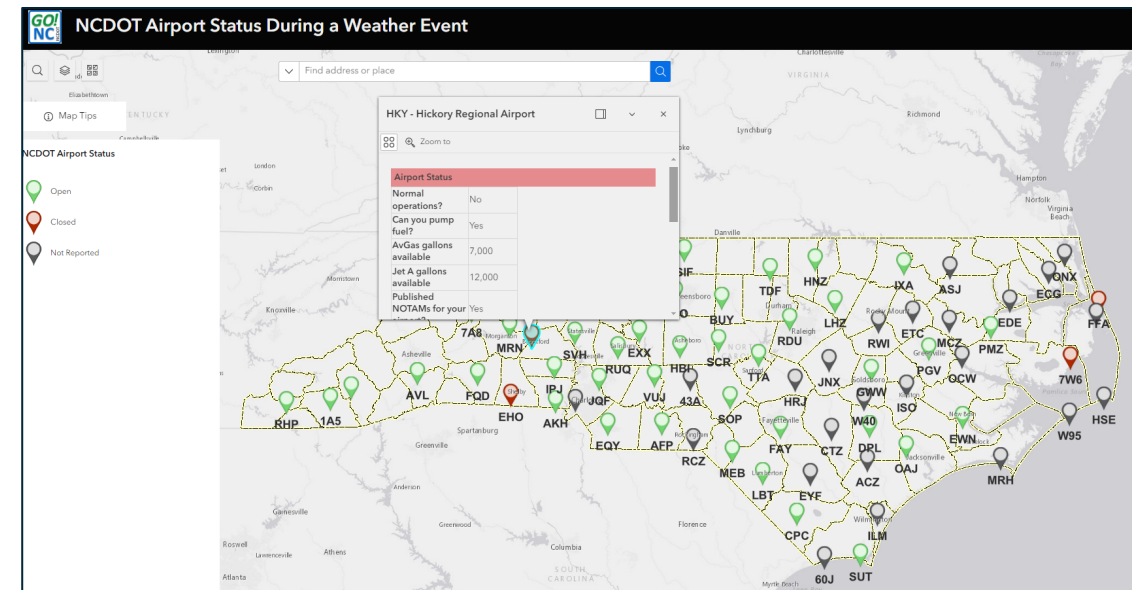
CONNECTING PEOPLE, PRODUCTS & PLACES
SAFELY AND EFFICIENTLY

PREPARE. RESPOND. RECOVER.

- **Critical Infrastructure SERT** – airport status and fuel monitoring
- **AirSERT** – safe operations of National Airspace System and inter-agency coordination
- **Flight Operations** – Crewed and UAS

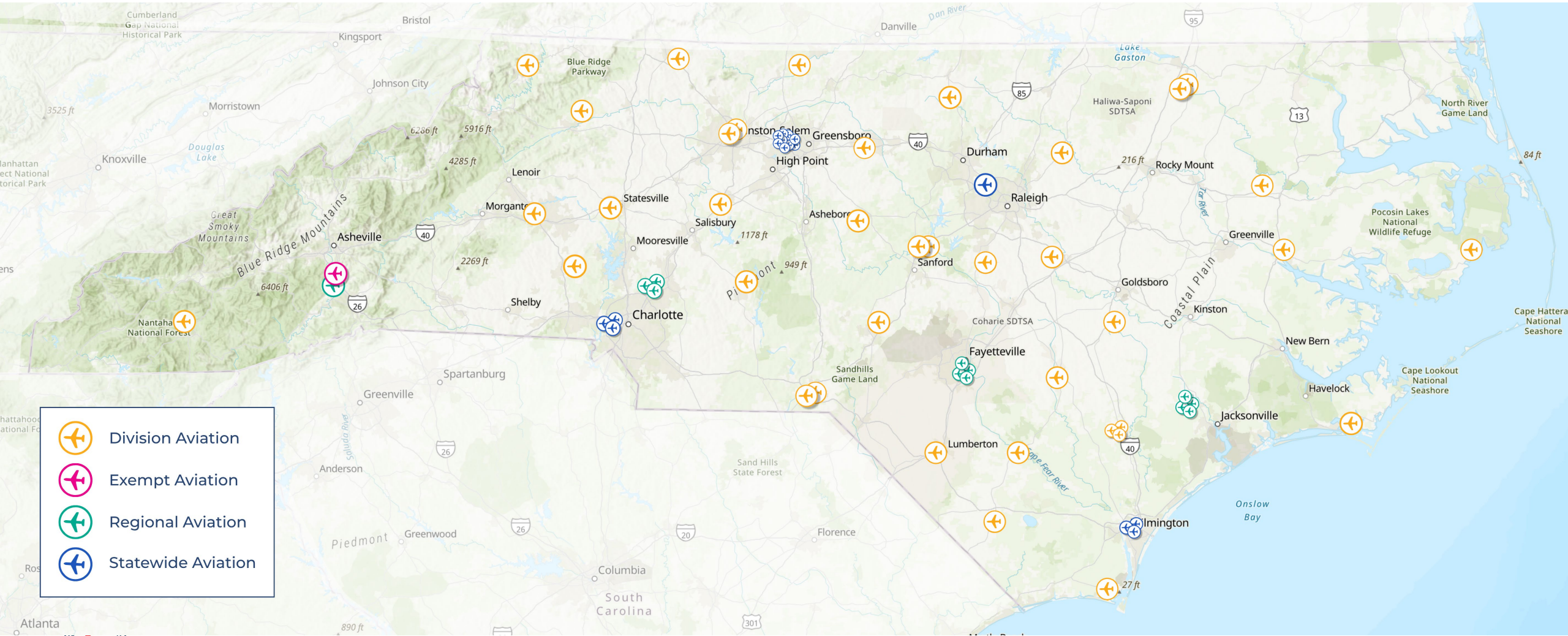


- Over 150 Attendees
- Hands-On Training
- New Technology Demos



Airport Project Highlights

Aviation STIP Projects



 Division Aviation

 Exempt Aviation

 Regional Aviation

 Statewide Aviation

UKF: Wilkes County Airport North Wilkesboro, NC

- High Country RPO
- Right-of-Way Cost: \$600,000
- Construction Estimate: \$16,643,000
 - STIP Approved: \$12,300,000
- Estimated Completion: 2027
- Runway extension to 7,000 linear feet
- AV-5894



SUT: Cape Fear Regional Jetport (Howie Franklin Field) Southport, NC

- Cape Fear RPO
- \$1,160,000
- Clear approach at Runway 5 and Runway 23
- Under Construction
- AV-5739



GTP: North Carolina Global Kinston, NC

TransPark Fleet Readiness Center

- Eastern Carolina RPO
- Fleet Readiness Center East (C-130 MRO)
- Total Project Cost: over \$400,000,000
 - Phase 1 = \$375,400,000
 - Phase 2 = over \$25,000,000
- Phase 1 Funding Sources:
 - NC SCIF: \$357,500,000
 - Golden LEAF: \$6,000,000
 - Commerce: \$1,900,000
 - NCDOT Aviation Economic Development Fund: \$10,000,000
- Completion Dates:
 - Phase 1: September 2026
 - Phase 2: 2028



ZEF: Elkin Municipal Airport Elkin, NC

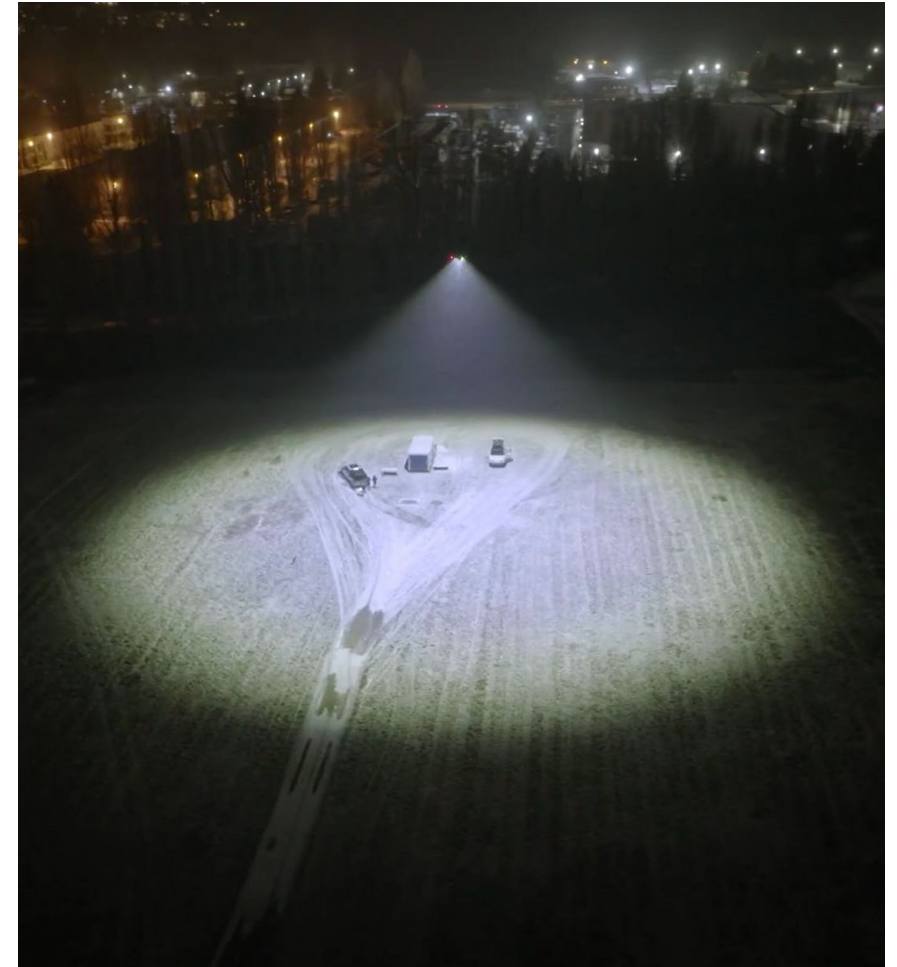
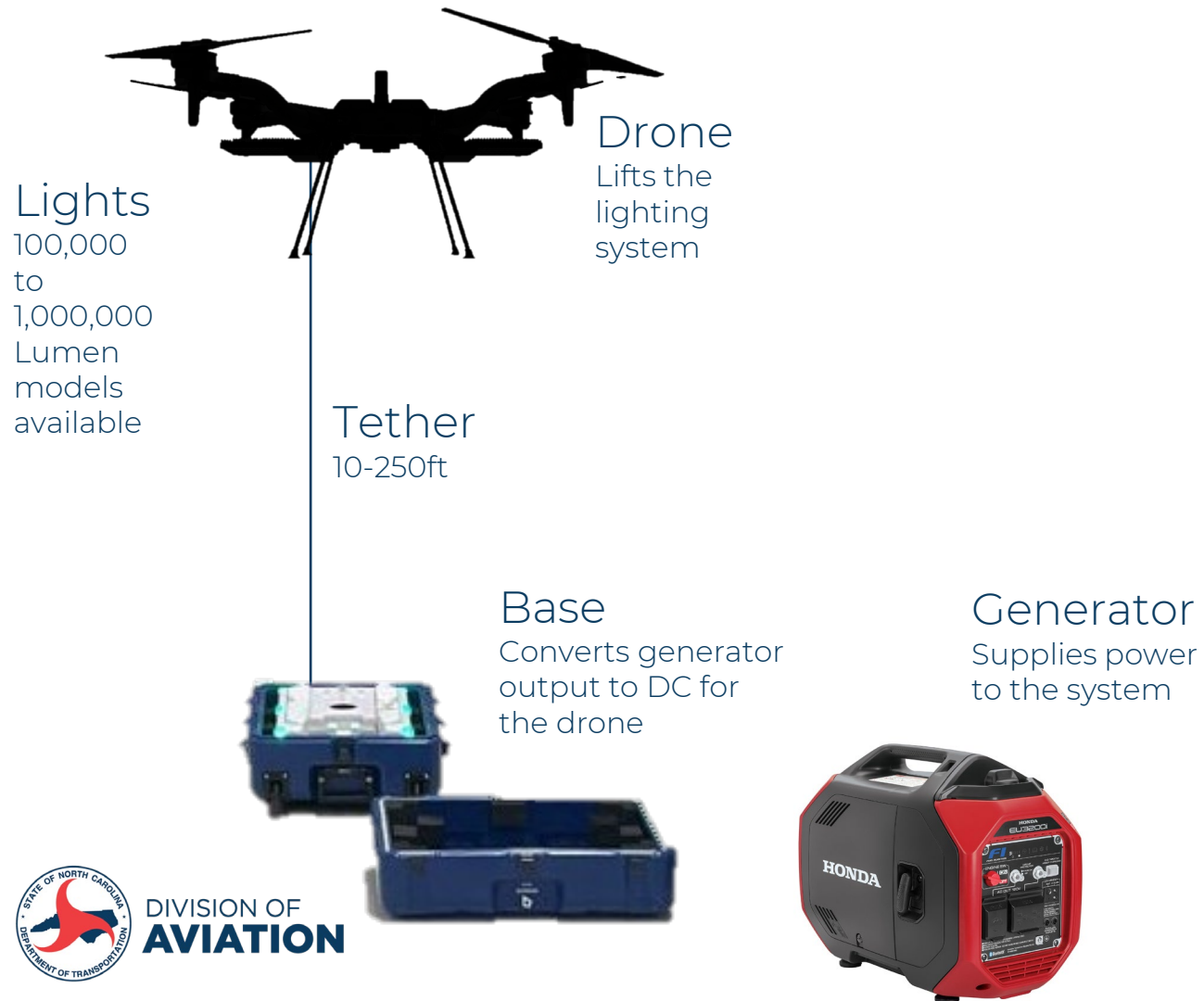
- Northwest Piedmont RPO
- Estimated Construction Cost: \$4,821,640
 - Safety Enhancement match due to ZEF being a “green” airport
- Estimated Construction Cost: \$4,821,640
- Expand aprons
- Completion Date: 2026



Emerging Aviation Tech Initiatives at NCDOT

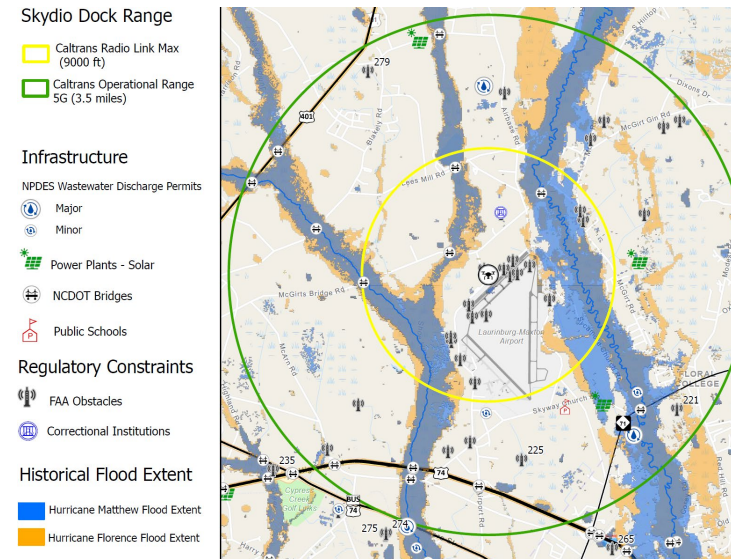
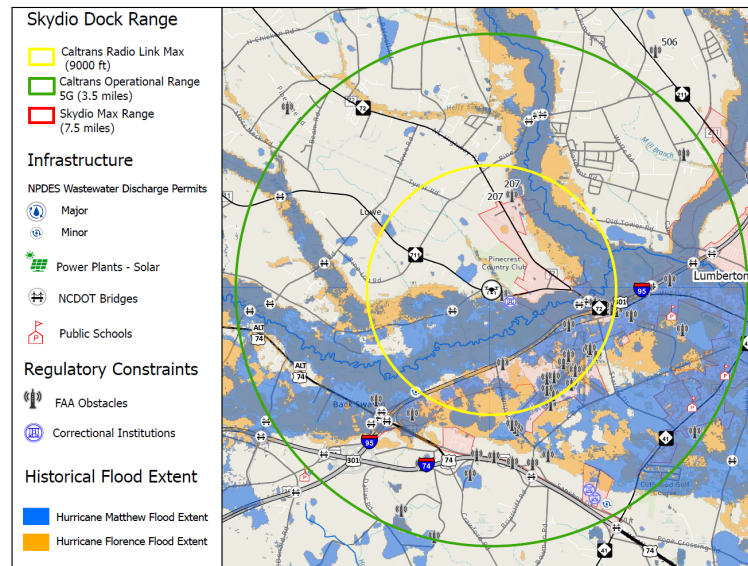
Drone Illumination for Worksite Safety (FHWA EDC

-8 STIC Grant)



USDOT RESPOND Grant 4 DIAB (Drone in a Box) Systems

- Thermal & digital cameras
- 7.5 Mile range
- Pre-Positioned drone docks
- Remotely operated from NCDOT Aviation Office in Raleigh

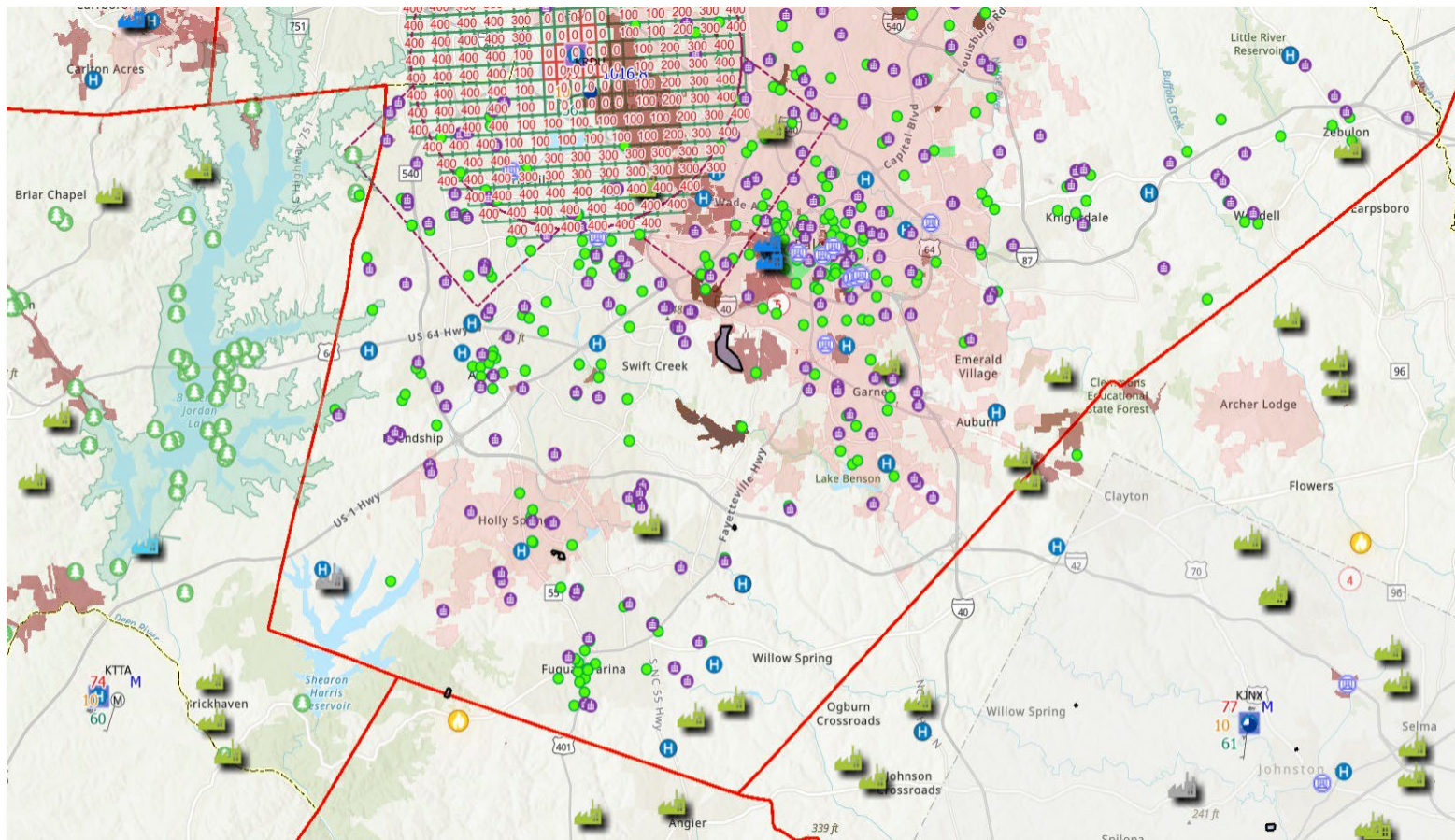


Fixed Site at Laurinburg-Maxton Airport

- 24,630 Acres
- 103 miles of state-maintained roads
- 26 bridges

Upcoming: NC U -Fli Application

Designed to serve NCDOT, NC citizens, both manned and unmanned aviators, legislators, state agencies, and business and industry stakeholders. It provides centralized access to federal, state, and local regulations governing UAS operations across North Carolina—at no cost to users.



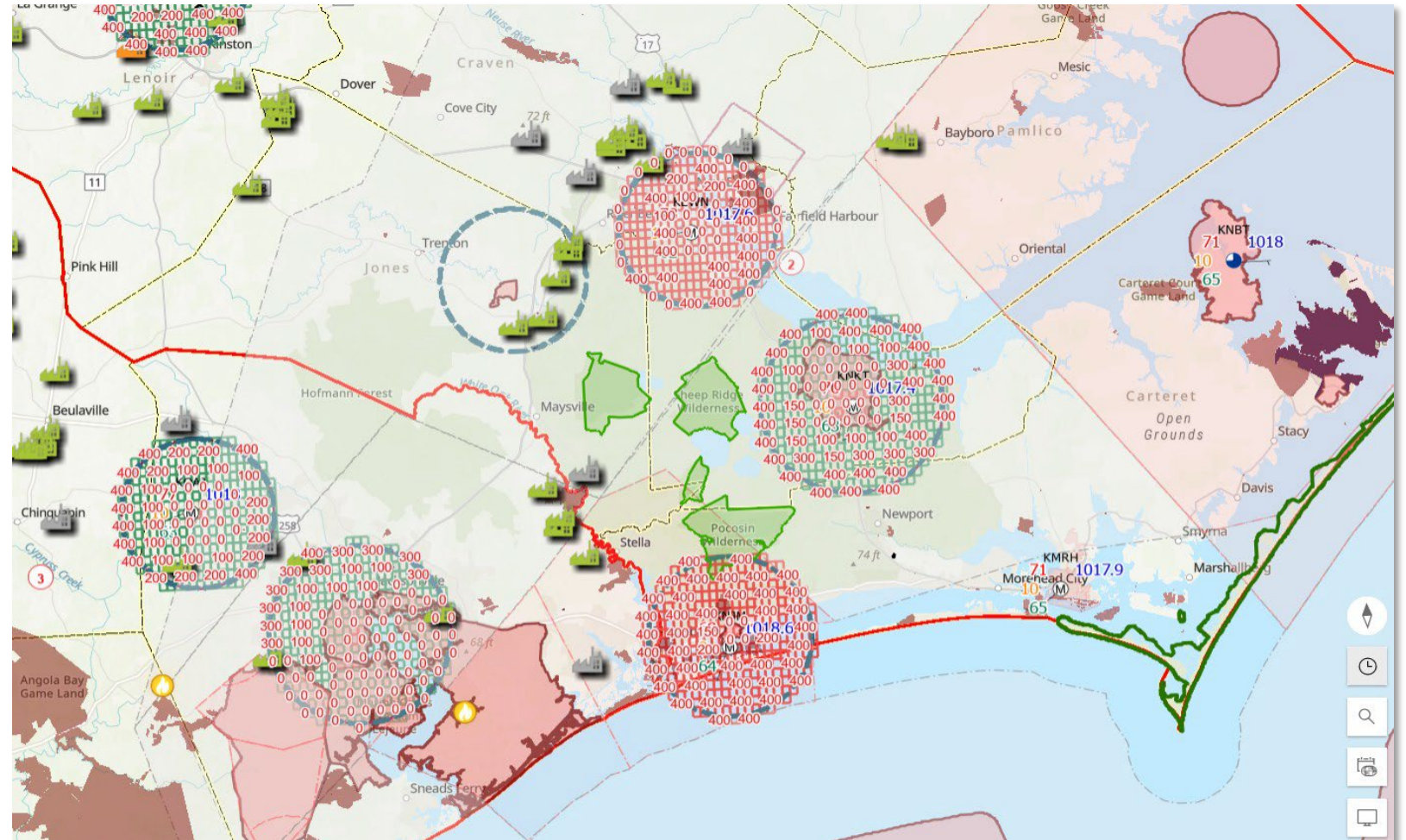
Screenshot Layers Based On:

- FAA Airspace and UAS Layers
- Weather Data
- USACE Jordan Lake UAS Guidelines
- NC State Owned Lands
- NC Correctional Institutions
- Active NC Forest Service Fires (last 30 days)
- Municipalities with UAS Ordinances (Holly Springs, Garner, Archer Lodge, Raleigh)
- County parks with UAS Ordinances (Wake/Chatham)
- City Parks with UAS Ordinance (Raleigh)
- Power Plants
- NC Medical Facilities
- Wake Co. School Locations

Upcoming: NC UAS-Fli Application

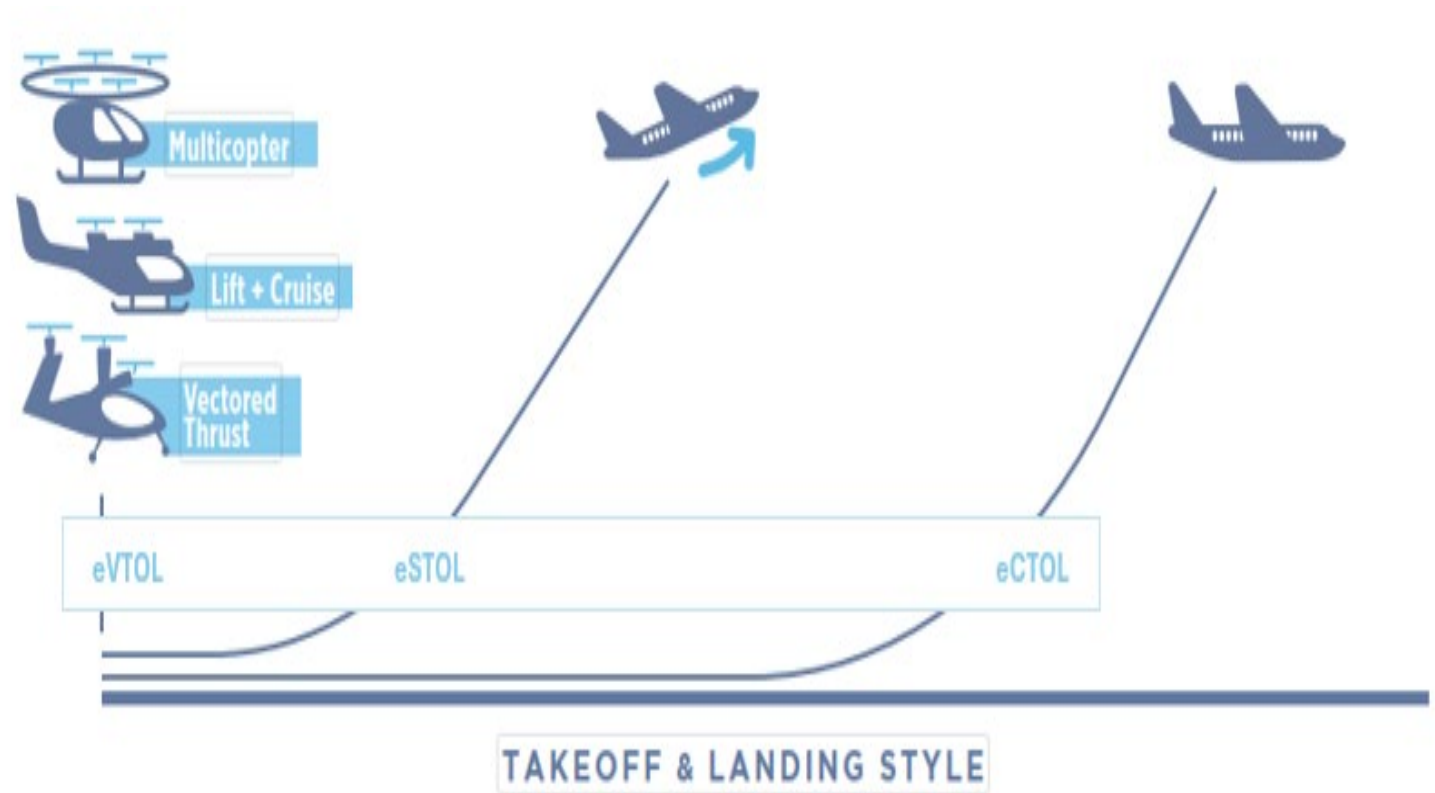
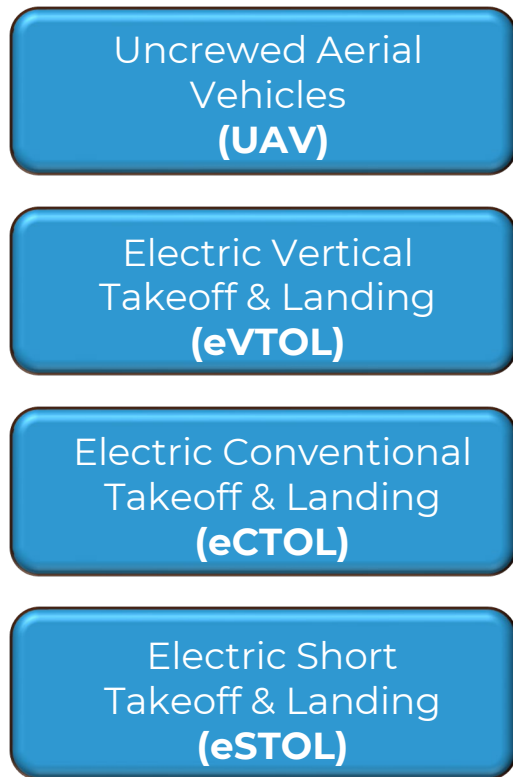
Screenshot 2 Layers:

- FAA Airspace and UAS Layers
- Weather Data
- Federal Wilderness Areas
- Federal Parks
- NC State Owned Lands
- Active NC Forest Service Fires (last 30 days)
- Municipalities with UAS Ordinances (Beaufort)
- Power Plants

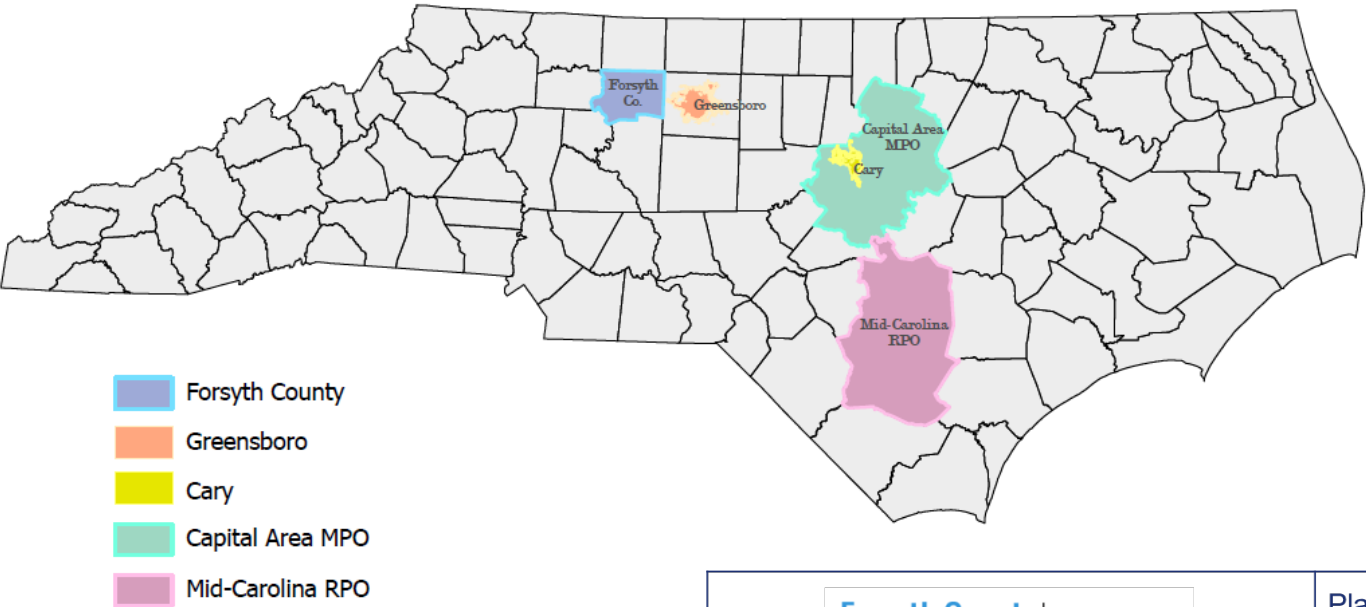


AAM Aircraft

AAM aircraft differ in how they take off and land—vertical, short, or conventional runway operations—enabling diverse applications across urban, rural, and regional settings. Most current models are electric ('e'), with some using hybrid-electric systems or alternative fuels.



AAM Planning Program



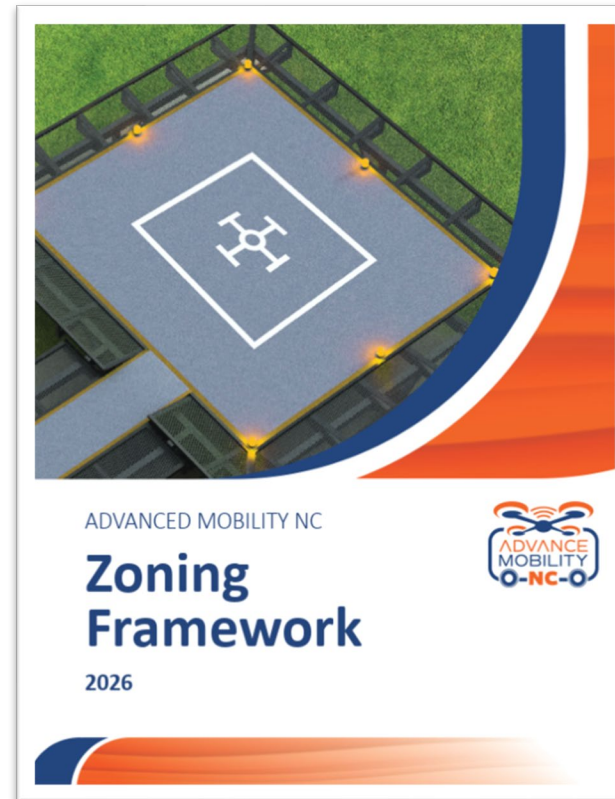
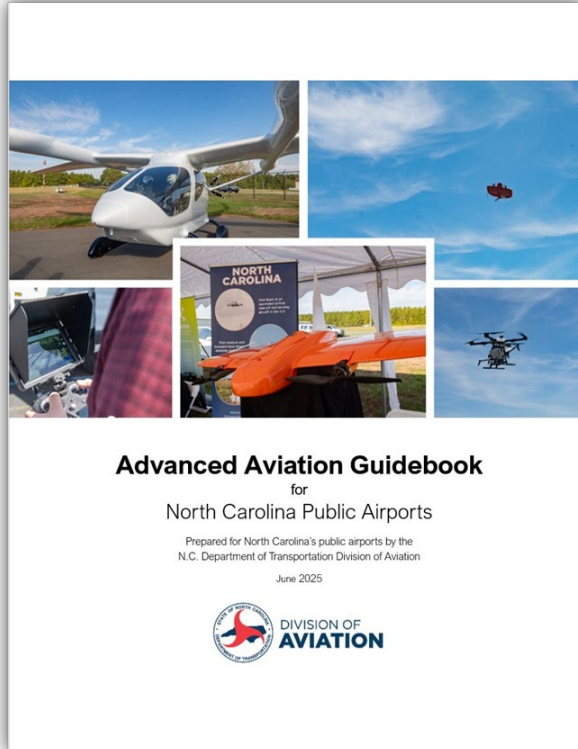
Funding for the program

- \$1M awarded in FY26
- \$750K available for FY27

Applications under review for FY27; announcements expected in September

	Planning a future AAM tech incubator with Forsyth Tech College
	Emphasizing policy and public outreach across the Greensboro MPO region
	Educating regional partners and hosting a one-day AAM symposium.
	Advancing policy and drone operations
	Connecting diverse rural-to-urban areas through AAM

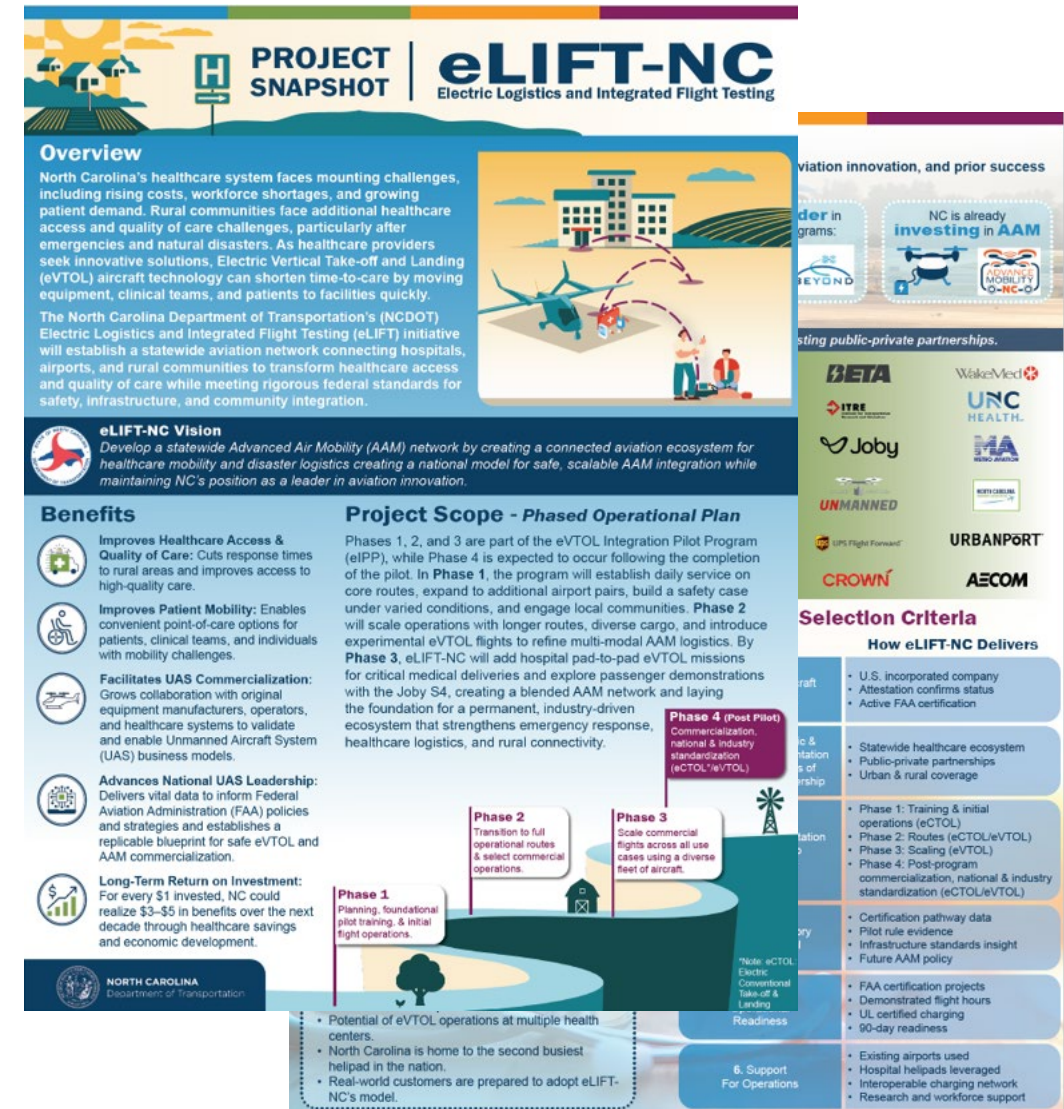
AAM Strategic Plan Implementation (Resources)



eIPP (eLIFT-NC) Exec Summary

Electric Logistics and Integrated Flight Testing – North Carolina (eLIFT-NC) is the state's eIPP, designed to demonstrate safe, scalable eVTOL and AAM operations that directly strengthen healthcare access, emergency response, and rural connectivity.

- **Healthcare-Driven Mission:** Partners WakeMed, UNC Health, and ECU Health bring real operational demand for patient transfers, organ transport, lab logistics, disaster response, and rural access.
- **Robust Coalition:** OEMs (BETA, Joby), Part 135 operators (Metro, Causey, UPS Flight Forward), service providers (URBANPORT, Climavision, Kongsberg), and Academia (NC AAM Center of Excellence, Virginia Tech) form a complete, interoperable ecosystem.
- **Statewide Infrastructure Advantage:** NC's 72-airport network, existing charging assets, and high-volume hospital helipads enable rapid deployment and scalable operations.

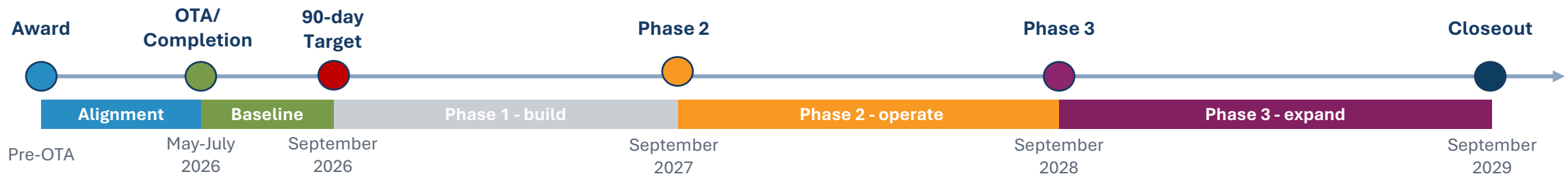
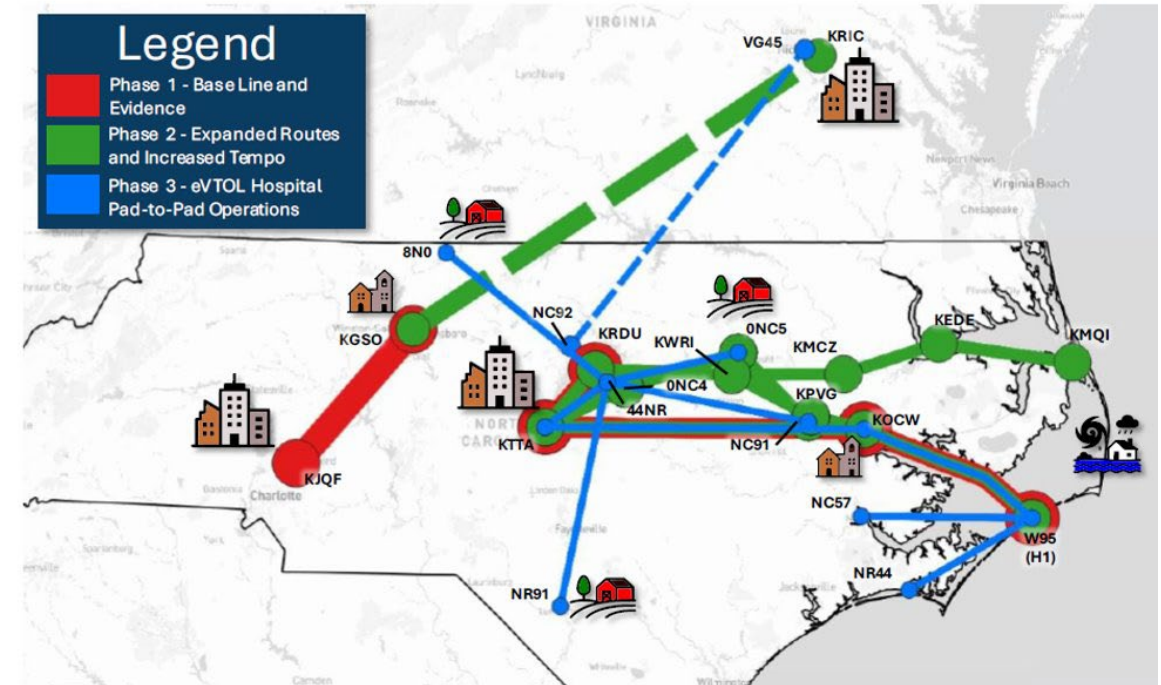


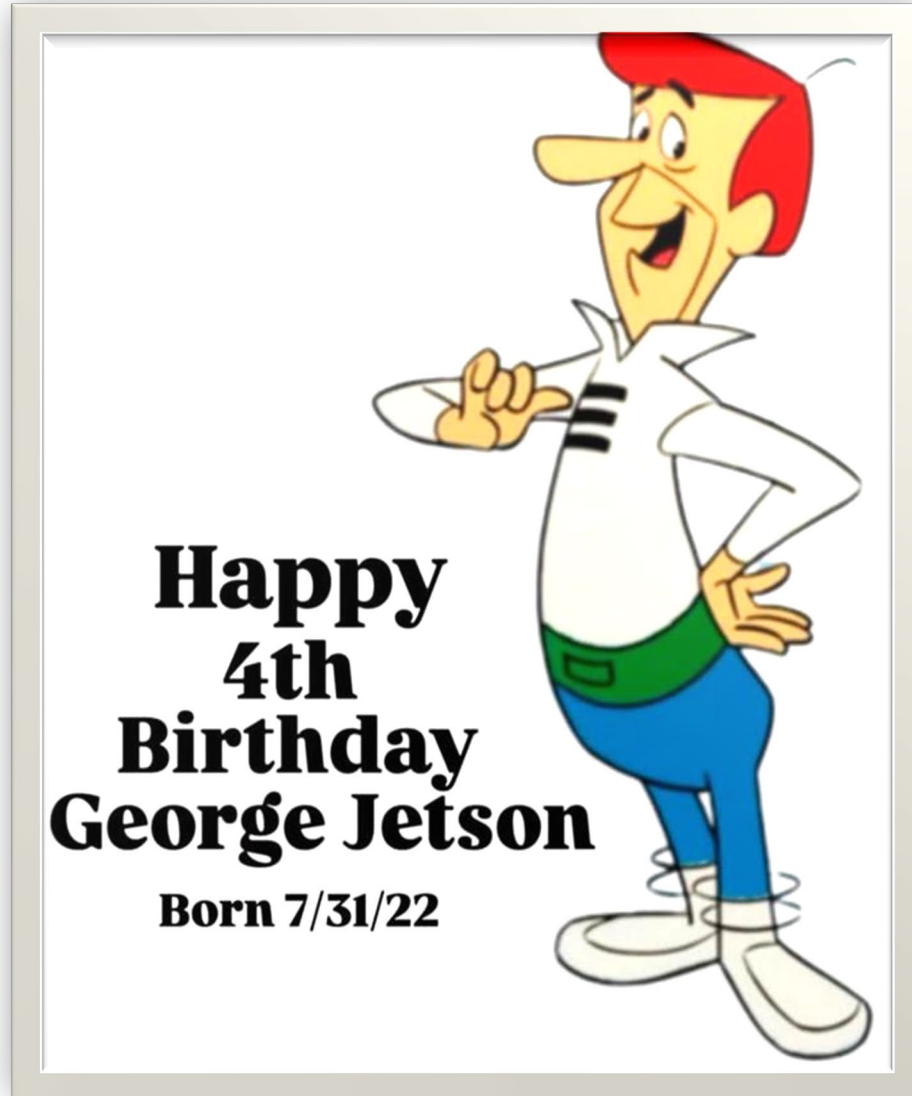
Aircraft Partners



eLIFT-NC Benefits:

- Airport connections with cTOL aircraft, then eVTOL routes of helipad-helipad
- Connects urbanized zones to rural communities
- Partners with Part 135 operators, OEMs, and healthcare partners to establish flight routes
- Supplements existing operations or needs
- Supports safe integration of AAM aircraft into the NAS





George Joesph Jetson (b.July, 31, 2022) is a fictional character and the 40-year-old father of the Jetson family in 2062. He is the husband of Jane Jetson and the father of teenage daughter Judy and elementary school aged son Elroy.

Contact Us

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