



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **CBP Unmanned Aircraft Reach 10,000-Hour Milestone**

**Washington**—U.S. Customs and Border Protection announced today that its Office of Air and Marine's Unmanned Aircraft System program has achieved a historic milestone, exceeding 10,000 flight hours.

Unveiled in 2005, the highly capable and proven Predator B UAS supports CBP's primary mission of securing the border and preventing acts of terrorism by helping to identify and intercept potential terrorist and illegal cross-border activity. Manufactured by General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc., the aircraft's operational capabilities, payload capacity and mission flexibility greatly enhances the agency's enforcement and emergency and disaster response efforts.

The remotely piloted aircraft provide aerial surveillance support for up to 20 hours for personnel on the ground by investigating sensor activity in remote areas to distinguish between real or perceived threats, allowing CBP ground forces to best allocate their resources and efforts, and providing increased visibility even at night or in low light.

CBP also deploys the UAS in support of federal and state directed disaster relief. The Predator B's capability to provide high-quality, real-time data assessing critical infrastructure before and after catastrophic events makes it an ideal aircraft to support emergency preparations and recovery efforts.

The CBP UAS provided emergency support for the 2008 Atlantic hurricane season and the 2009, 2010 and 2011 Red River floods in the Midwest with excellent results. During the 2011 Red River Flood response, CBP flew and collected 1,778 nautical miles of Synthetic Aperture Radar in 22 days, heralding the single most extensive SAR collection efforts ever achieved. The CBP UAS was also operated in the Gulf of Mexico to assist with oil search efforts during the Deepwater Horizon incident.

Today, CBP operates three Predator B aircraft from Libby Army Airfield in Sierra Vista, Ariz., and two from Grand Forks Air Base in North Dakota. OAM also operates a Predator B maritime variant, the Guardian, from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, in Florida and Naval Air Station Corpus Christi in Texas.

In March 2008, CBP and the U.S. Coast Guard successfully conducted a demonstration of a maritime variant of the Predator B from Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla. The event was the culmination of more than a year's work to deploy and demonstrate the integration of a variant of the Predator B within CBP and Coast Guard maritime operations. In November 2008, CBP and the Coast Guard formed a UAS joint program office to identify and address common maritime UAS requirements, including sensors, command and control, data exploitation, logistics training and basing.

CBP currently has two additional Predator B aircraft on order with scheduled delivery dates in early fiscal year 2012. These aircraft will be the new "Dash 7" configuration that can be equipped with either land or maritime radar systems in less than eight hours.

#### **CBP Unmanned Aircraft System highlights:**

- UAS Predator operations have resulted in the apprehension of 4,865 undocumented aliens and 238 smugglers; the seizure of 33,773 pounds of contraband; and 4,285 sensor activations.
- OAM has trained over 100 UAS aircrew since program inception.
- Fort Drum, New York, OAM conducted simultaneous UAS law enforcement support operations via satellite, and demonstrated long-endurance UAS operations executed by several OAM UAS command sites.
- In July 2009, OAM conducted the first-ever UAS landing at a commercial airport for CBP's participation in Oshkosh. This was also the first time a UAS was on display at a non-military event.
- To date, CBP has more than ten mission Certificates of Authorization in place, including two that account for approximately 1,200 miles along the U.S.-Mexico border and another that stretches 950 miles along the northern border from Spokane, Wash., to the vicinity of Lake-of-the-Woods, Minn.

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*U.S. Customs and Border Protection is the unified border agency within the Department of Homeland Security charged with the management, control and protection of our nation's borders at and between official ports of entry. CBP is charged with keeping terrorists and terrorist weapons out of the country while enforcing hundreds of U.S. laws.*

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