

VPORTS TO CREATE FIRST INTERNATIONAL ADVANCED AIR MOBILITY CORRIDOR BETWEEN SYRACUSE, NY AND QUÉBEC

News / Business aviation



VPorts announces the creation of the first international electric AAM corridor between Syracuse Hancock International Airport (New York, U.S.) and VPorts' vertiport in Mirabel (Quebec, Canada). This corridor will foster the establishment of an AAM ecosystem that will provide a platform for full commercial cargo transport operations using eVTOL aircraft. The first eVTOL aircraft test flights are planned for 2023.

A consortium of international organizations including VPorts, NUAIR, Syracuse Hancock International Airport, Aero Montreal, Innovitech, the Unmanned Aerial System Centre of Excellence and Helijet International, have signed a MOU to establish international electric AAM corridors between Quebec (Canada) and the United States.

Dr. Fethi Chebil, President and Founder of VPorts, commented: "The aim of the corridors is to build an AAM ecosystem that will provide a platform for full commercial cargo transport operations using eVTOLs. They will allow the consortium's members to explore all aspects of AAM, including goods transportation, charging readiness, stakeholder management, business cases, security and safety protocols, social acceptability and urban integration of infrastructure and operations. Many

companies and organizations rapidly investing in these related new capabilities are present in Central New York State today with good prospects of growth, and others are likely to be attracted to the region.”

New York State Governor Kathy Hochul recently announced that the state will be providing NUAIR with an additional \$21 million in “Central New York Rising” Upstate Revitalization Initiative funding that will allow NUAIR to continue to cultivate the world-leading uncrewed aircraft systems (UAS) and AAM industry hub in Central New York and the Mohawk Valley. The additional funding will allow for critical infrastructure to be tested and deployed to enable advanced industry applications, state agency adoption of UAS, AAM development, and associated workforce development. NUAIR continues to be an industry catalyst due to its unique capabilities, years of experience, and proven safety record through thousands of advanced UAS operations.

“New York’s state-of-the-art drone corridor further elevates our global leadership in this evolving market for cutting-edge UAS technology,” said Empire State Development President, CEO and Commissioner Hope Knight. “Our ongoing investment and focus on drone and advanced air mobility corridor operations will continue to strengthen and grow the statewide economy, especially in the Central New York and Mohawk Valley regions, for generations to come.”

A recent study by NEXA Capital estimates that the full expansion of UAS and AAM-related industries to Central New York could create over 8,100 full-time jobs by 2040, while incrementally generating over \$1.3 billion in direct, indirect, and induced economic benefits. This includes direct effects of investment in the region of up to \$130 million, the indirect effects of household earnings of workers, and the induced effects of value-added benefits and additional industry earnings. This impact on the region will produce jobs for an emerging knowledge-based economic sector, with highly skilled workers sourced in part by existing New York State university institutions.

“There are currently over 5,000 underutilized regional airports throughout the United States,” said NUAIR CEO Ken Stewart. “The development of this international AAM corridor between Syracuse, NY and Montreal will help lay the foundation for regional air mobility (RAM) operations for those underutilized airports, assisting with cargo deliveries and strengthening United States supply chains. NUAIR will build on the foundation of its 50-mile UAS Corridor, and UAS traffic management (UTM) systems and our work with NASA on Vertiport Automation Systems to integrate this next generation aircraft into America’s National Airspace System.”

Syracuse Hancock International Airport (SYR) aspires to reconnect communities who have been previously cut off from economic opportunities due to a lack of traditional transportation infrastructure. Becoming a partner in creating the AAM corridor will allow underserved communities a new transportation alternative that will reconnect those communities and provide additional economic opportunities to its members.

“The Syracuse Regional Airport Authority (SRAA), operator of Syracuse Hancock International Airport, is proud to take part in the creation of an international electric AAM corridor,” said SRAA Executive Director Jason Terreri. “This undertaking, which will sustainably connect communities in Upstate New York and beyond, firmly aligns with the SRAA’s goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the electrification of transportation-related technology at SYR. SYR is one of the first airports in the U.S. to include UAS/AAM infrastructure planning as part of its Master Plan.”

The project stakeholders intend to work closely and proactively with Transport Canada, NAV CANADA, and the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to leverage their respective expertise and regulatory authority to foster the implementation of an international framework that tests relevant technology, regulatory alignment and air traffic procedures and management.

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