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GoldenEye's First Flight Successful

Aurora Demonstrates Potential for a New Breed of Unmanned Aircraft

MANASSAS, VA, September 8, 2003 – Aurora Flight Sciences Corporation announced today the successful first flight of its unique GoldenEye-100 unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV). During early morning hours, the barrel-shaped autonomous vehicle executed a smooth vertical take-off and transition to a stable hover well above the ground-hugging mist at the Manassas Regional Airport in Virginia. "This demonstration completes a key milestone in our development program," according to Carl Schaefer, GoldenEye-100 Program Manager. "It confirms the robustness of flight control systems and other key technologies in this unique autonomous system." GoldenEye features unconventional performance that enables it to take-off and land vertically, like a helicopter, then level off into horizontal flight by virtue of rotating wings. This provides users with access to a bird's-eye-view of hard to reach areas. Its engine, known as a ducted-fan, is a propeller shrouded within a cylindrical body – a design that integrates advanced lightweight structures and innovative flight controls to achieve the remarkable performance. A key subsystem that contributed to flight success is the GuideStar™ flight control system developed by Aurora's sister company, Athena Technologies.

The GoldenEye-100 has been tailored as an affordable military or civilian UAV for low-altitude reconnaissance, surveillance or target acquisition missions. GoldenEye-100 stands 5.5 feet tall with a gross takeoff weight of 150 pounds. The aircraft can cruise up to four hours with a range of more than 500 miles at a maximum speed of 160 knots.

In addition to the 150-pound vehicle, Aurora is developing a smaller, 16-pound derivative called GoldenEye-50. Aurora plans to build multiple GoldenEye-50s for homeland security applications and expansion of the rapid flight envelope of the ducted-fan vehicle class. This includes transition from hover to horizontal flight and high-speed dash performance.

"This was an outstanding execution of first flight for this unique surveillance tool," said Aurora president John Langford, "A tool we see as playing a key role in the company's future." Aurora was founded in 1989 to develop affordable robotic aircraft for global climate change research. Aurora Flight Sciences is a leading supplier of unmanned air vehicle designs, components, and flight services for government, industry, and academic clients. Aurora operates facilities in Virginia, West Virginia, and California. The company specializes in the design and production of high-altitude UAVs, and is a major supplier of composite structures for Global Hawk and other aircraft.



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