Boeing HorizonX Invests in Unmanned Systems Technology Leader Near Earth Autonomy

Partnership to explore technologies for defense and commercial applications

CHICAGO, Oct. 19, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- Boeing [NYSE: BA] announced its investment in Near Earth Autonomy, a Pittsburgh-based company focused on developing a portfolio of technologies that enable safe and reliable autonomous flight.

In addition to the investment, Boeing and Near Earth Autonomy also announced a partnership to explore future products and applications for emerging markets such as urban mobility.

"This partnership will accelerate technology solutions that we feel will be key to unlocking emerging markets of autonomous flight," said Steve Nordlund, Boeing HorizonX vice president. "We are excited to begin this partnership with a company with such a depth of experience in autonomy so we can leverage the scale of Boeing to innovate for our customers."

The investment in Near Earth Autonomy is the first in autonomous technologies by Boeing HorizonX Ventures since it was established in April. Near Earth Autonomy, a spin-off from Carnegie Mellon University's Robotics Institute, is a leader in software and sensor technology that enables aircraft ranging from sub-meter to full scale to inspect, map and survey terrain and infrastructure, as well as transport cargo autonomously.

"This is an exciting opportunity for Near Earth," said Sanjiv Singh, CEO, Near Earth Autonomy. "The Boeing HorizonX investment will accelerate the development of robust products and enable access to a broader portfolio of applications for aerial autonomy."

Near Earth's founders have over three decades of experience developing autonomous systems for ground and aerial vehicles. Two of their groundbreaking achievements include the world's first full-size autonomous helicopter flights in partnership with the U.S. Army in 2010 and ongoing work with the Office of Naval Research developing an autonomous aerial cargo delivery platform for the U.S. Marines.

By leveraging the power of the world's largest aerospace company, Boeing HorizonX invests in new business ventures to unlock the next generation of game-changing ideas, products, and markets. The Boeing HorizonX Ventures portfolio includes investments in wearable enabled technologies, augmented reality systems, hybrid-electric propulsion, and artificial intelligence. HorizonX also seeks unique business opportunities and non-traditional partnerships for the company's aerospace technology using disruptive innovations and business strategies.

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