

Unmanned Aircraft Flies Over Oslo

From the Grand Forks Herald
By: Ryan Bakken

Joel Robberstad, crew chief of UND's ScanEagle prepares the UAS for Wednesday's flight over the flooded Oslo, Minn., area. photo by Eric Hylden



Unmanned aircraft system demonstrates its potential as tool to help fight floods. Open article link, then look down the page to see the video.

RURAL OSLO, Minn. — The aircraft with the 10-foot wingspan was launched from a slingshot-like apparatus, using pressurized air.

Within 12.5 feet, it was traveling at 60 miles per hour. And, within seconds, it was producing video of Red River flooding.

The prime mission of the ScanEagle, an unmanned aircraft system, was to communicate with other airborne planes in the region. However, as long as it was aloft, it also was taking footage of the high water, showcasing yet another potential use of the UAS.

Mark Hastings, the on-the-ground pilot for Wednesday's exercise, said that the aircraft and its camera are ideal for flood monitoring, perhaps even better than manned flight.

"It can stay up for 20 hours, staring at the same thing without getting bored," he said.

Mike Nelson, a UAS manager with the John D. Odegard School of Aerospace, said it's an effective tool for flood research and for flood search-and-rescue "spotting people who are stranded."

In 2009, Nelson said, UAS-produced images led to a decision to dynamite an ice jam.

The UAS is just scraping the surface of its potential,

said Bruce Smith the Aerospace dean. "It will be involved in almost anything you can imagine," he said.

"In 15 years, this will be the airborne platform of choice for everything except passenger travel."

The ScanEagle is petite — weighing 45 pounds and 4.5 feet in length — and easy on gas, with 20 flight hours on its two gallons of gas. But it's not cheap, as the aircraft costs \$200,000 and the equipment that goes with it brings the to-

tal cost into the millions.

And it has a serious mission, providing surveillance and reconnaissance in the Middle East.

It requires no runway and is designed to be launched off small boats. It lands by hooking a rope with a wing. And it possibly will be coming to flood fights near you soon.

Reach Bakken at (701) 780-1125; (800) 477-6572, ext. 125; or send e-mail to rbakken@gfherald.com.

Speed Kills!

Slow Down & Live!

PUBLIC NOTICE

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
Minnkota Power Coop, Inc.
345 kV Transmission Line - Center to Grand Forks
Siting Application
Case No. PU-09-670
NOTICE OF RESCHEDULED HEARINGS
April 20, 2011

On February 18, 2011, Minnkota Power Cooperative, Inc. (Minnkota) filed an application for a Certificate of Site Compatibility for Transmission Facility Corridor for approximately 260 miles of 345 kV transmission line and associated facilities to be constructed from the Center Substation near Center, North Dakota to the Prairie Substation near Grand Forks, North Dakota, as shown on the attached map.

Minnkota requests the Commission approve a 1,000 foot-wide corridor under

N.D. Admin. Code section 69-06-04-02(b). If a corridor certificate is granted then a separate route permit application and hearing is required before designating a transmission line route within the approved corridor.

On March 24, 2011 the Commission issued a Notice of Filing and Notice of Hearing, scheduling three separate public hearings for May 3, 4, and 13, 2011. The Commission has since received several requests to postpone the hearings until after the spring planting season. Therefore, please take notice that Public Hearings on the application are rescheduled to be held:

June 16, 2011, 10:00 a.m. at the Northwood High School, 300 35th St. NE, Northwood, ND 58267.

June 17, 2011, 10:00 a.m. at the Chieftain Conference Center, Teepee Room, 60 4th Ave. S, Carrington, ND 58204.

June 24, 2011, 10:00 a.m. at Memorial Hall, 805 Main Ave., Washburn, ND 58577.

The issues to be considered are:

1. Will the location, construction, and operation of the proposed facilities produce minimal adverse effects on the environment and upon the welfare of the citizens of North Dakota?

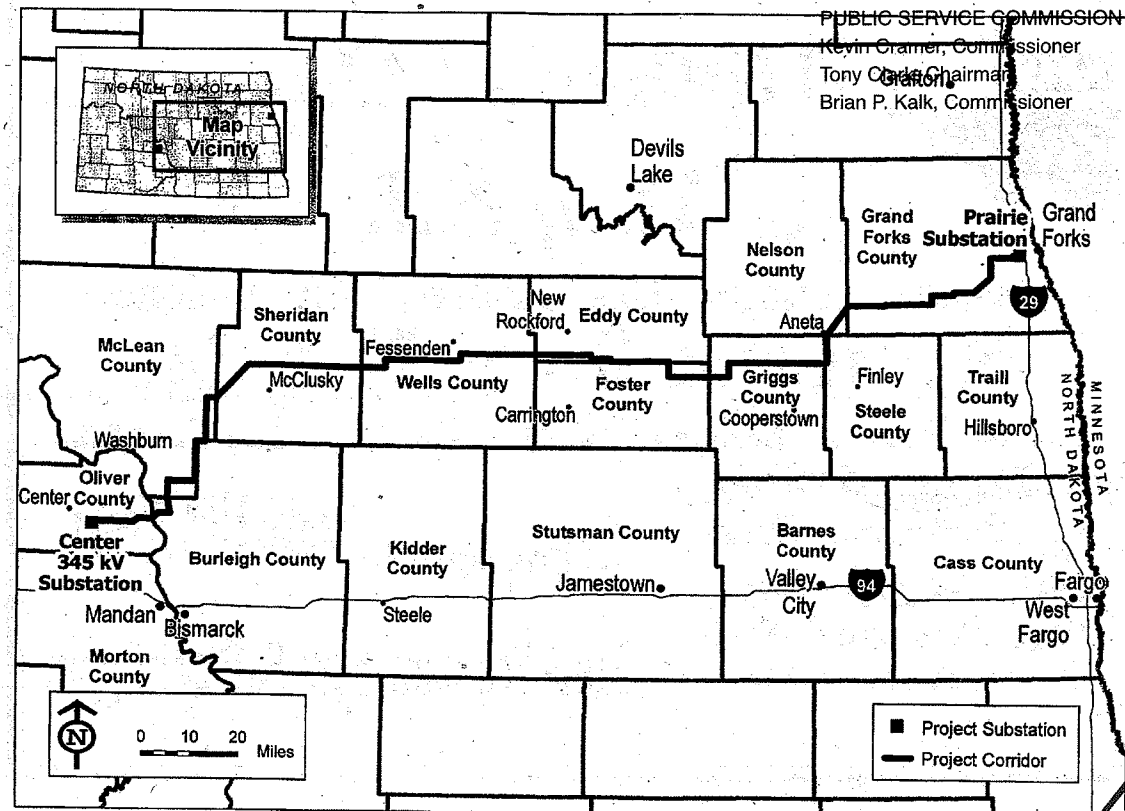
2. Are the proposed facilities compatible with the environmental preservation and the efficient use of resources?

3. Will the proposed facility locations minimize adverse human and environmental impact while ensuring continuing system reliability and integrity and ensuring that energy needs are met and fulfilled in an orderly and timely fashion?

4. Is it appropriate for the Commission to approve a 1,000 foot-wide corridor as requested in the application?

For more information contact the Public Service Commission, State Capitol, Bismarck, North Dakota 58505, 701-328-2400; or Relay North Dakota, 1-800-366-6888 TTY. If you require any auxiliary aids or services, such as readers, signers, or Braille materials, please notify the Commission.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
Kevin Cramer, Commissioner
Tony Cramer, Chairman
Brian P. Kalk, Commissioner



Warning Sirens to Be Tested May 4th in Nelson County Cities

Severe Summer Weather Awareness Week will be May 2-May 6, 2011. This is an annual event to keep the public informed and remind them of the potential risks of summer storms. Statewide tests of the warning system will include outdoor warning sirens, radio and television broadcasts, all-hazards radio and cable-interrupt alerts.

Warning sirens will be tested in the cities of Aneta, Lakota, McVie, Michigan, Pekin, Petersburg, and Tolna on Wednesday, May 4 sometime between 11:00 and 11:30 a.m. The siren will ring in a steady blast for approximately 3 minutes.

In a real emergency, this outdoor warning siren will be used to notify residents that they should seek appropriate shelter and information regarding potential threats to safety and property. Information can be obtained by turning on the radio, TV, or listening to an all-hazards (weather) radio for further information and instructions.

Keep in mind that sirens really are more of an outdoor warning device. Many households may not be able to hear the warning inside their home. Nelson County Emergency Management encourages all public buildings and offices, businesses and homeowners to purchase and use an All Hazards Weather Radio to monitor and receive notifications of watches and warnings. These radios can be set to automatically alert you of impending threats and can be purchased at most electronic and department stores.

Tornado Safety Tips

If at home:

Σ Go at once to a windowless, interior room; storm cellar; basement; or lowest level of the building.

Σ If there is no basement, go to an inner hallway or a smaller

inner room without windows, such as a bathroom or closet. Get away from the windows. Go to the center of the room. Stay away from corners because they tend to attract debris.

Σ Get under a piece of sturdy furniture such as a workbench or heavy table or desk and hold on to it.

Σ Use arms to protect head and neck.

Σ If in a mobile home, get out and find shelter elsewhere.

If at work or school:

Σ Go to the basement or to an inside hallway at the lowest level.

Σ Avoid places with wide-span roofs such as auditoriums, cafeterias, large hallways, or shopping malls.

Σ Get under a piece of sturdy furniture such as a workbench or heavy table or desk and hold on to it.

Σ Kneel on the floor with elbows touching the floor. Use arms to protect head and neck.

If outdoors:

Σ If possible, get inside a building.

Σ If shelter is not available or there is no time to get indoors, lie in a ditch or low-lying area or crouch near a strong building. Be aware of the potential for flooding.

Σ Use arms to protect head and neck.

If in a car:

Σ Never try to out drive a tornado in a car or truck. Tornadoes can change direction quickly and can lift up a car or truck and toss it through the air.

Σ Get out of the car immediately and take shelter in a nearby building.

Σ If there is no time to get indoors, get out of the car and lie in a ditch or low-lying area away from the vehicle.

Σ Be aware of the potential for flooding.

USDA Raises Statewide Home Loan Limit

Increase aims to address housing shortage

BISMARCK, April 26, 2011 — Jasper Schneider, USDA Rural Development State Director, today announced that the statewide direct home loan limit in all North Dakota counties will increase from \$147,500 to \$179,000. The change in USDA policy will allow more low- and moderate-income earners to purchase housing.

Schneider touted today's increase as a step in the right direction for North Dakotans looking into home ownership. The new loan limits help reach the 'sweet spot' of a moderate priced home which has risen in recent years due to the increase in demand and associated costs of building. Access to capital and appraisal gaps have created challenges in using traditional financing options.

"The combination of high demand and low supply for quality housing has created a sharp increase in the price of housing in many rural communities," Schneider said. "This increase will also help alleviate the cost barrier to construct affordable homes because of rising material costs and labor wages."

The direct home loan limit had not been changed since 2005 and now is increasing by \$31,500, which is a 21 percent increase. The new limit is ef-

fective immediately and will also apply to Corson County in South Dakota as it is included in North Dakota's service area for Native Americans. As established last year, the direct home loan limit in Williams County will remain at \$224,590. This limit was raised citing that the growth of energy production has led to a dramatic increase in the cost of housing and a shortage of available units to support the surrounding economy.

To determine the appropriate area loan limit, a market analysis was conducted of statewide residential property sales. The analysis included gathering data from local real estate companies, brokers, building contractors and developers, lenders, city leaders and other regional partners. Based on the collected data, it was determined that the cost of construction for a modest home in the state averaged \$179,000.

Further information on rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting USDA Rural Development's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.