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NOAA UAS Program Shows Strong Presence at 2016 AUVSI's Xponential Conference

Robbie Hood, Todd Jacobs & JC Coffey brief at the UAS industry's largest conference.

The NOAA Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Program was well represented at the Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI) annual conference – XPONENTIAL. The 2016 conference was held in New Orleans at the Morial Convention Center on the west bank of the Mississippi, May 2-5. Over 8,000 industry leaders and professionals from more than 55 countries came together to discuss the latest innovations in the unmanned systems field with over 600 cutting-edge companies providing information about the future of unmanned systems policy, regulations and technology. The NOAA UAS Program leadership presented several times during the conference covering a wide variety of topics.

Robbie Hood, NOAA's UAS Program Director's panel discussed key areas of interest to women in the unmanned systems and robotics communities, including how to bring greater diversity to this field. This was a unique opportunity to interact, engage and share ideas with leading women across the country in the field of robotics and remote sensing.

NOAA UAS Principal Investigator Todd Jacobs' panel discussed UAS applications that were conducted in the Polar regions (Arctic and Antarctic) and the West Coast for wildlife (including endangered species), marine and Polar monitoring. These missions included recent successes in the Arctic on board the USCGC (Icebreaker) Healy, and Antarctic on board the USCGC (Icebreaker) Polar Star with the Puma UAS. The panel included presentations given by scientists in North America from the academic, government and private sectors, and discussed the great potential for applying unmanned systems for wildlife and maritime research and management.

JC Coffey's panel focused on UAS Command, Control, and Communications (C3) ranging from small UASs to the Global Hawk's network, which is capable of operating thousands of miles from its Ground Control Station (GCS). The main focus of the presentation was on resolving challenges involved in NASA's Global Hawk UAS Payload C3, which included security, transport protocols, fault tolerance, recovery, as well as trade offs involved in on and off board processing.

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