



*County of Caroline*  
*Department of Fire-Rescue & Emergency Management*

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Caroline launches new UAS Program**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 10, 2017**

Caroline, Virginia - The Caroline County Department of Fire – Rescue and Emergency Management is proud to announce their new County Unmanned Aircraft System – UAS (drone) Program for Search and Rescue, Emergency Management and other purposes. UASs have become increasingly popular in public safety and disaster management across the country. They allow an economical and safe way to quickly survey an area or incident.

Caroline anticipates using it's UAS to support a variety of public safety missions. Missions may include: firefighting incident situational awareness, search and rescue, Amber and Senior Alerts, training programs, damage assessment, traffic assessment, hazardous material assessment, pre-plans, and scene documentation.

The Department has made the purchase of a small commercial UAS with the intent to pursue future grant opportunities for a public safety grade aircraft with additional payload sensors such as FLIR (thermal imaging) cameras. We are very much starting at the ground floor.

For the past several months, the County has been developing the policies and procedures for the program and researching best practices across the nation. The Virginia Department of Emergency Management UAS Coordinator Darren Goodbar has been especially helpful with the development of our program.

The County program will be managed by Deputy Fire – EMS Chief Mark Garnett under the County's Department of Fire – Rescue and Emergency Management. Chief Garnett has obtained his Remote Pilot Certification from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) after successfully completing all testing and requirements. Additional team members from the County, including both volunteer and career Fire and Rescue and the Caroline Sheriff's Office, are currently in the process to become certified. The County is also pursuing a formal Certification of Authorization (COA) for government entities with the FAA.

We hope to build a program that will help us better serve and protect those who live and visit Caroline County. The team will additionally be deployable to assist neighboring jurisdictions through the Virginia Department of Emergency Management.

For more information on the program, contact the Department of Fire-Rescue & Emergency Management at (804) 633-9831.

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**Figure 1 – Deputy Chief Garnett demonstrates the County’s UAS to Sheriff A.A. “Tony” Lipa and Assistant County Administrator Alan Partin at the May 9<sup>th</sup> County Board of Supervisors Meeting**



**Figure 2 – Chairman of the Caroline Board of Supervisors Jeff Black observes the County’s new quadcopter UAS at the May 9<sup>th</sup> County Board of Supervisors Meeting**



**Figure 3 – Caroline UAS1 takes off for a demonstration flight for the Caroline County Board at their May 9<sup>th</sup> meeting.**

*All Photos Taken by Mark Svare*