

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Exploring the possibilities of drones

### *Workshop brings together UAS experts and interested parties from public and private sectors*

Over 150 working professionals pondered how local government, first responders and the private sector can use unmanned aerial systems (UAS) technology appropriately for safety and essential functions in Washington state at a June 28 workshop at Clover Park Technical College in Lakewood.

The [Center for Regional Disaster Resilience \(CRDR\)](#) and the [Pacific Northwest Economic Region \(PNWER\)](#), in partnership with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Aviation Division, organized the workshop. The workshop focused on applications of UAS, also known as drones, in Washington state and featured expert speakers, UAS users and interactive discussions.

“Drones are usually in the news for inappropriate uses of the technology by individuals who own hobby-style equipment,” said Eric Holdeman, CRDR Director. “Businesses and public agencies are looking for ways to use drones to enhance their ability to provide their services in a more efficient and effective manner. This workshop highlighted best practices for those organizations looking to implement a drone program. Careful adherence to all laws, proper training of personnel and having effective policies in place before beginning a drone program were just a few of the lessons shared by a series of presenters and panelists.”

UAS is rapidly growing in both public and private sectors, with usage moving quickly from hobbyists to sophisticated systems for safety, security and damage assessment. [Northeastern University](#) is working with PNWER on concept to utilize lidar, technology using light from a pulsed laser to create a visual model of an area, on a drone to do post-earthquake structural inspections of bridges.

As federal regulation continues to evolve, so does ongoing dialog about the regulation of UAS at the state and local government levels. One area of resounding interest is the use of UAS to assist in the assessment of critical infrastructure following a disaster. This also includes general assessments to provide safe decision-making tools.

Currently, the potential for collaboration and information-sharing between public and private sector UAS users is significant. To continue the conversation, about 40 attendees expressed interest in being part of a Washington state UAS/Drone Users Group.

This group would serve as a forum for sharing information between participating personnel and organizations. Membership will not include hobbyists.

Visit the [UAS/Drone Users Group website](#) for more information or contact Holdeman at [eric.holdeman@pnwer.org](mailto:eric.holdeman@pnwer.org) or 253-376-6683.

#### Hyperlinks within the release:

- Center for Regional Disaster Resilience: <https://www.regionalresilience.org/>
- Pacific Northwest Economic Region: <http://www.pnwer.org/>
- Northeastern University: <https://www.northeastern.edu/>
- UAS/Drone Users Group: <https://www.regionalresilience.org/droneworkshop.html>



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