

# AggieAir Flies for NASA Airspace Study | College of Engineering

10/02/2019

News Release — Oct. 2 2019 — In the skies above Reno, Nevada, USU engineers fly drones above the high-rise hotels and casinos, hopping from rooftop to rooftop. The flights were part of a NASA-led study to develop a new unmanned aerial traffic management system.



AggieAir, USU's premier unmanned aerial systems platform flew every day during the 30-day evaluation this summer — the only research group to do so.

The goal of the operation was to evaluate unmanned aerial vehicle traffic in a busy city environment during beyond-line-of-sight conditions. Flying drones beyond an operator's line of sight is an important next step if drones are to be used for package delivery and newsgathering. Flying drones over populated areas is a complex

challenge. Large cities, with their unique weather patterns and skylines, create even greater challenges to safe flight.

"Beyond line of sight means operating drones without having the pilot's eyes on the aircraft," said USU's Cal Coopmans, a research assistant professor and director of the AggieAir program. "It's a big step forward in what has been years of unmanned systems research and testing."

###

Research Contact: Cal Coopmans,  
[cal.coopmans@usu.edu](mailto:cal.coopmans@usu.edu)

Writer: Matt Jensen, 435-797-8170,  
[matthew.jensen@usu.edu](mailto:matthew.jensen@usu.edu)