



FISTA Innovation Park Awarded \$500,000 State Grant for Counter Unmanned Aerial System Academy in Lawton

Lawton, OK — FISTA Innovation Park, a leading center for technological advancement and innovation based in Lawton, Oklahoma, is proud to announce the receipt of a significant state grant valued at \$500,000. This substantial funding, awarded by the Oklahoma Strategic Military Planning Commission, is earmarked for the establishment of a pioneering Counter Unmanned Aerial System (CUAS) Academy located at the Innovation Park. This initiative underscores Lawton Fort Sill's commitment to growing its economy and advancing defense

capabilities by enabling mission diversity for Fort Sill and the surrounding community.

According to Eddie Compton, OMSPC Chairman, 'The Oklahoma Strategic Military Planning Commission approved this grant to enable mission diversity for Fort Sill and the surrounding community. This grant will assist in making the Lawton area the nation's premier training and research center for counter Unmanned Aerial Systems/Vehicles (UAS/V). By increasing the presence of industry and subject matter experts in both military and commercial UAS/V counter operations, this project will provide a mission that will continue to grow into the future.' It aims to equip law enforcement and civilian personnel with the knowledge and skills required to detect, track, and neutralize potentially hostile or unauthorized drones. This initiative not only strengthens security but also positions Oklahoma as a leader in the rapidly evolving field of unmanned systems defense.

"The formation of the Counter Unmanned Aerial System Academy is a milestone moment for FISTA Innovation Park and the state of Oklahoma," said Dr. Krista Ratliff, President & CEO of FISTA Innovation Park. "This generous grant from the state enables us to develop world-class training dedicated to the development of counter-drone technologies and training programs that are critical for the safety and security of our communities."

The CUAS Academy plans to collaborate with academic institutions, industry leaders, and governmental agencies to foster innovation and develop cutting-edge solutions to counter the emerging threats posed by unmanned aerial systems. The academy will offer a range of programs, from certificate courses to hands-on training sessions, designed to meet the evolving needs of professionals in the field.

Preparation of the CUAS Academy began in 2023, with the initial training class slated to launch in August of 2024. This initiative will also create numerous job opportunities in Lawton and contribute to the economic growth of the region.

"We are grateful for the state's support and confidence in FISTA Innovation Park's capabilities to lead this critical initiative," added Mark Brace, Chairman of the FISTA Development Trust Authority Board of Trustees. "Together, we are growing our community economically and setting the foundation for a safer, more secure future."

About FISTA Innovation Park FISTA Innovation Park is at the forefront of technological innovation and development in Lawton Ft Sill, Oklahoma. Committed to advancing research and education in defense and technology, FISTA serves as a hub for collaboration among industry, government, and academia to address the most pressing challenges of our time.

About FISTA Innovation Park FISTA Innovation Park is at the forefront of technological innovation and development in Lawton Ft Sill, Oklahoma. Committed to advancing research and education in defense and technology, FISTA serves as a hub for collaboration among industry, government, and academia to address the most pressing challenges of our time. For additional information contact Dr. Krista Ratliff at 580-353-4782 or krista@thefista.com