



DRONERESPONDERS

OUTSTANDING DRONE PROGRAM 2023

RECOGNITION OF OUTSTANDING PUBLIC SAFETY DRONE PROGRAM

Name of Department/Agency: Easley SC Police Department

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How long program in operation? Started 2022

How many aircraft in program? 7

What types of aircraft in fleet? DJI M300, DJI Mavic 2 Advanced and Dual, DJI Mavic Mini 2, DJI Avata

How many remote pilots in program? 10

Do you operate with COA, Part 107 or both? We operate with both. Only under COA for our DFR. All other ops are 107.

How has your drone program been innovative for your department? Incredibly.

How has your drone program enhanced safety for your department? First in the state for a DFR program. We have proven its success cases, even though we do not operate it full-time and though it's cumbersome with the current FAA regulations we abide by. We offer mutual aid to nearly any agency nearby and have had several successful deployments outside our jurisdiction. The best part is our community supports the program and it's a great engagement resource for the community. We - like many agencies - are sometimes short-staffed. Our drone has offered response to some calls that do not require multiple unit response, and we can determine that quickly. This allows us to keep valuable resources in-service and reduce cost of response. It's also offered the ability to arrive on a scene and overwatch a solo officer to offer communications and other officers the ability to know what's happening right then is a incredible option. We have been able to arrive on scene before ground units to offer locations of suspects and other viable information to reduce the time on the scene, and reduce inadvertently engaging non-involved persons and interfering with their freedom, which is key.

How has your drone program improved operational effectiveness? The most effective component of our drone program is our integration to our SWAT / tactical team. We no longer enter structures without the drone ahead of our breaching team. Our DFR program, due to our limitations by the FAA requires a lot of VO resources. Albeit not effective, our goal has been to prove use case, with safety and low risk, in hopes we can advance the DFR solutions in the future. We need the capability to fly in low risk airspace without so many visual observers or else this is not effective as a long-term solution for public safety. We do not have a dedicated option.

News Link: <https://www.wspa.com/news/local-news/first-responder-friday-easley-police-drone-first-responder-program/>