AMERIFLIGHT BECOMES FIRST PART 135 CARGO AIRLINE TO RECEIVE EXEMPTION TO OPERATE DRONES

News / Airlines

Ameriflight has received approval from the FAA to operate drone aircraft, making Ameriflight the first existing Part 135 Cargo airline to receive such exemption. The newly granted exemption allows Ameriflight to conduct UAS operations under its current Part 119 Air Carrier Certificate for Part 135 operations. Moreover, the company has approval to add the Matternet M2 to its fleet, enabling the launch of the first fully operational, large-scale drone operation in the United States.

Through its partnership with Matternet Ameriflight intends to operate the Matternet M2 drone for commercial delivery, focusing on health care and e-commerce deliveries to customers located in

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dense urban and suburban environments across the country. Ameriflight will deploy the M2 fleet of drones using Matternet's software platform from a central remote Network Operations Center, allowing the company to safely expand its network, while maintaining the highest level of pilot operator supervision and flexibility. Ameriflight intends to operate its uncrewed aircraft as a supplement to its crewed operations, not replacing the current flying operation, aircraft, or pilots.

Ameriflight President and CEO Alan Rusinowitz, commented: “Adding this state-of-the-art, environmentally friendly aircraft and launching our UAS division allows us to expand our service offerings to off-airport alternative sites for time-sensitive small package needs.Matternet’s technology is at the forefront of autonomous innovation and provides a revolutionary solution for customers. We’re looking forward to launching our first M2 flights very soon, and, as we move forward into future flight, developing additional areas of drone delivery.”

Medical samples and small batch pharmaceuticals will be the initial cargo for the M2, offering a fix to the slow and unpredictable delivery times of today’s ground transportation method, resulting in increased reliability. In addition to healthcare, Matternet is expanding into e-commerce, where drone delivery can enable ultra-fast delivery of small packages.

Ameriflight Owner and Chairman Jim Martell, said: “The approval to add drones to our operation positions Ameriflight, once again, at the forefront of innovation in the aviation industry. Moving forward with the future of our newly operative UAS division allows us to expand into a largely untapped delivery market with a lot of room for speed and safety logistic improvements. After having accomplished this unprecedented milestone, we are more than excited to continue our partnership with Matternet, a best-in-class developer of cutting-edge drone delivery technology.”

Andreas Raptopoulos, Co-Founder and CEO of Matternet, stated: “We are thrilled to enable the nationwide deployment of our drone delivery system and to have Ameriflight, a leading cargo airline with a strong track record of reliability, safety, and performance, at our side. This partnership enables us to offer our customers turnkey access to fast and reliable on-demand delivery capabilities today. This is not a test program or a future deployment concept – this is the real, scalable, and safe drone-based solution that customers are looking for.”

This marks Ameriflight third announcement this year regarding its expansion into the drone world after having signed with Sabrewing Aircraft on the purchase of its Rhaegal-A aircraft, a 1-ton payload, medium-haul feeder uncrewed aerial vehicle, and just prior having signed with Natilus on the purchase of its Kona aircraft, a 3.8-ton payload, short-haul feeder uncrewed aerial vehicle. Ameriflight intends to use all three fleet types in tandem with its current operation. The company’s goal is to build diversified aviation services, and this fits well with that vision.

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