WSU, K-State and KU part of new drone research center

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The Wichita Eagle

The Federal Aviation Administration said Friday it had selected a team led by Mississippi State University — and that includes Wichita State University — to operate a new National Center of Excellence for Unmanned Aircraft Systems.

The center, to be based at Mississippi State, will be charged with commercial unmanned aircraft research, development and integration into the nation’s airspace, according to a news release from Mississippi State.

The team comprises 18 universities in 13 states and the United Kingdom. Congress appropriated $5 million to launch the center.

Kansas State University and the University of Kansas are also part of the team, whose name is Alliance for System Safety of UAS through Research Excellence.

Tracee Friess, a spokeswoman for the National Institute for Aviation Research at WSU, confirmed on Friday WSU’s participation in ASSURE. She said NIAR and WSU will assist in projects by providing expertise in areas such as aerodynamic
testing.

“This team has the capabilities and resources to quickly get up and running to help the FAA address the demands of this challenging technology over the next decade,” FAA administrator Michael Huerta said in the release.

The center is expected to begin research in September 2015.