Tuesday, January 7, 2025

To: Office of the Texas Governor

Ref: 423.008 – Reporting by Law Enforcement Agency (2023 & 2024)

Agency Overview:

This report provides an overview of the activities and operational data for Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) utilized by the Ellis County Sheriff's Office, in accordance with Section 423.008 of the Texas Government Code. The following data reflects UAS usage for the calendar years 2023 and 2024. Sheriff Norman established the UAS program in March 2023 to create an effective and efficient resource for the entire county. The total estimated cost for acquiring, maintaining, repairing, and operating the UAS program over the past 24 months is $79,800.

Operational Summary

Response Type	Count of Responses	Total Hours
Dispatched	63	47
Mutual Aid	55	51
Other	31	19
Self-Initiated	39	38
Training	180	261
Grand Total	**368**	**497.9**

Definitions of Response Types:

- **Dispatched**: UAS deployed in response to specific calls for service within the jurisdiction.
- **Mutual Aid**: UAS utilized to assist neighboring jurisdictions or agencies upon request.
- **Other**: Includes public demonstrations, community engagement, or non-standard operational uses.
- **Self-Initiated**: UAS deployments in public areas initiated proactively by agency personnel for surveillance, monitoring, or reconnaissance.
- **Training**: Activities conducted to certify new operators, maintain proficiency, and enhance tactical readiness.

Safety and Compliance

Accidents:

- **Count**: 0
- **Description**: No accidents involving UAS operations were reported during the reporting periods.

Mishaps:

- **Count**: 0
- **Description**: No incidents classified as mishaps occurred, maintaining a perfect operational safety record.

Compliance with Section 423

All UAS operations adhered strictly to the legal and regulatory frameworks established under Section 423 of the Texas Government Code. Deployments were conducted for authorized purposes, and no unauthorized surveillance activities were carried out. Data collection was limited to operational needs, ensuring the privacy of individuals and communities.

Analysis and Recommendations

- **Training Emphasis**: With 180 training deployments accounting for 261 hours, the agency prioritizes operator readiness and compliance. Continued investment in training will enhance operational effectiveness.
- **Mutual Aid and Collaboration**: Mutual aid accounted for 55 responses, demonstrating the value of interagency cooperation. Expanding capabilities for regional support is recommended.
- **Self-Initiated Operations**: The agency conducted 39 self-initiated missions, showcasing proactive use of UAS technology. Regular review of these missions ensures alignment with strategic objectives.