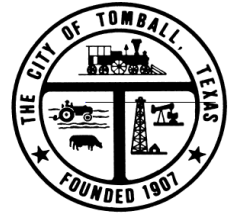


PRESS RELEASE

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TOMBALL POLICE DEPARTMENT



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For Immediate Release

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Tomball Police Department Takes Crime Fighting to New Heights

In June 2010, the Tomball Police Department (TPD) was selected from a nationwide candidate pool to become a member of the United States Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice's Aviation Technology Program (DOJ). The program is entitled, "Advancing Criminal Justice Policy, Practice, and Technology – Evaluation of Low-cost Aviation Options for Law Enforcement." www.justnet.org/aviation

In support of this partnership between the TPD and DOJ, and in an effort to enhance public safety throughout the City of Tomball and surrounding areas, the DOJ has provided direct funding of \$40,000 for research and evaluation of a gyroplane (not gyrocopter) aircraft for law enforcement aviation use, and also funded pilot and tactical flight officer training for members of the newly formed TPD Air Support Unit.

While the TPD will be the first American public safety agency to utilize the gyroplane in law enforcement aviation, the use of this type of aircraft is not novel. The novelty lies in the bringing of best practices from Europe to the United States.

The aircraft (Auto-Gyro MTOsport) is manufactured in Germany to strict airworthiness standards required in Britain, Germany, and Australia. There are more than 1,000 MTOsport gyroplanes flying worldwide, many of which are being used by military units, civil air patrol, and police agencies around the world, and the aircraft has an excellent safety record.

The Federal Aviation Administration has not yet created a specific manufactures category for gyroplanes to be produced in the US, however; this is currently in process. In the meantime, the TPD will operate the aircraft under public use rules following Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) Part 91 – General Operating and Flight Rules. All pilots will be trained by factory certified instructors and the aircraft will be professionally maintained.

The aircraft burns between 3-4 gallons of gas per hour, and can use either aviation fuel or regular auto gasoline. The impressive fuel conservation and fuel options make this aircraft extremely economical to operate.

As a result of positive intra-agency relations/partnership with the Harris County Sheriff's Office (HCSO), and through mutual aid agreement, the gyroplane is being maintained at David Wayne Hooks Airport, in the HCSO Air Support Unit hanger.

The aircraft will be primarily used for traffic monitoring/mitigation (e.g. aggressive driving); airborne patrols to identify and deter criminal activity (e.g. burglaries, car thefts, etc.); search and rescue missions; damage assessments following significant weather events; photography of critical infrastructure (e.g. utilities, medical complexes, schools, commercial business, etc.); patrolling planned community events, such as the German Fest and Holiday Parade; surveillance during high-risk warrant services; and in response to unusual occurrences to provide situational awareness to incident commanders on the ground.

The force multiplier created by placing a trained aviation team (command pilot and tactical flight officer) in the air amounts to the equivalent of 18-22 police officers on the ground. Other agencies involved in the Aviation Technology Program, using similar technologies, have experienced significant results:

- Ripon Police Department (CA) using a Powered Parachute (PPC) has decreased daytime burglary rates by 64%;
- Guilford County (NC) used a Sky Arrow S-LSA to locate over \$10,000,000 in illegal drugs;
- T'Ohono Odam Tribal Nation (AZ) used a PPC to located flood victims who were saved from certain death;
- Montgomery County Police Department (MD) used Tecnam Eaglets to provide security support during the most recent Presidential Inauguration.

While gyroplanes are new to law enforcement in the US, the implementation of this aircraft is based on proven success in Europe as a safe, low-cost alternative to traditional law enforcement aviation programs that cost millions of dollars per year to operate on even the smallest scale.

This is an exciting opportunity for the City of Tomball to positively impact public safety in our community and the surrounding areas, but moreover, this is an opportunity for us to make significant contributions to law enforcement nationwide.