

On October 19, 2016 Umatilla County Sheriff's Office announced their Unmanned Aircraft System (drone) Program for Search and Rescue, Emergency Management and other purposes. Drone technology is helping public safety agencies find missing people faster and can provide assistance to distressed victims in many types of disaster incidents. During a search and rescue mission, this tool will help us view a much larger area much faster than with traditional methods, and can direct ground searchers and provide aid to a victim more quickly, which can help save lives.

UCSO consulted for several months with Steve Chrisman and recently, Darryl Abling and their staff at the Pendleton UAS Range for advice and direction on how to use drone technology. They continue to be a great source of information and support!

Sergeant Dwight Johnson is managing the program, and has obtained a Remote Pilot Certification from the Federal Aviation Administration after successfully completing all testing and requirements. Umatilla County Sheriff's Office is in the process of recruiting additional staff members to test and become certified. While our program is in its infancy, we hope to build a robust program in the future that will help us fulfill our mission to serve and protect those who live and visit Umatilla County.