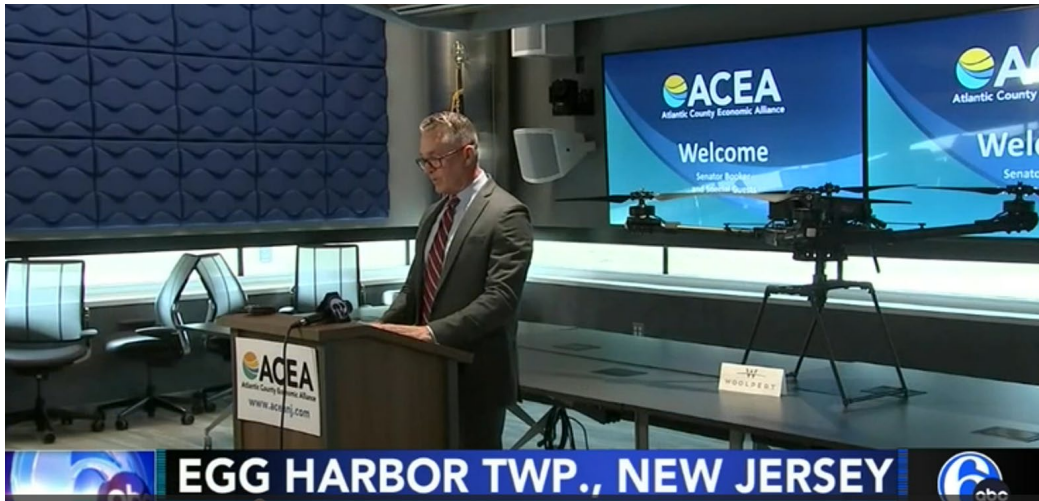


Atlantic County Economic Alliance Veterans Training Grant – Clip Report

March 30, 2023

6 ABC News - Philadelphia
March 2023



Fox 29 News - Philadelphia
March 2023



Press of Atlantic City

March 2, 2023

Link: https://pressofatlanticcity.com/news/local/atlantic-county-economic-alliance-booker-tout-film-and-drone-programs-to-help-veterans/article_1d2fb482-b87f-11ed-915e-1baa958ae3b6.html

THE PRESS OF ATLANTIC CITY



Ready to wrestle

35 locals are set to compete at the state individual wrestling tournament in Atlantic City.

SPORTS 11

Havana syndrome

U.S. intelligence agencies cannot link a foreign adversary to brain injuries and other symptoms. NATIONALWORLD.A7

A.M. RAIN 64 • 36 FORECAST, A6 | THURSDAY, MARCH 2, 2023 | Serving Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland & southern Ocean counties | PressOfAtlanticCity.com

Icona owner says OC hotel plan likely off

Cites lack of support from city

BY BILL MARLOW Staff writer

OCEAN CITY — Eastace Mita seems set to roll up his plans and walk away from a proposal for a 325-room hotel on the boardwalk at Fifth Street, following Mayor Jay Gilliam's announcement Tuesday that he would not support the proposal. "We are probably going to have

to look elsewhere at this point," Mita said. Last week, his proposal for a high-rise hotel, with an estimated cost of close to \$175 million, sent shock waves through the land between a municipal parking lot and the boardwalk, where there are now sand dunes and a line of beach volleyball courts. Mita argued the city has been steadily losing hotel rooms over the past two decades, which will eventually starve businesses and restaurants in the Ashbury Avenue downtown and along the Boardwalk of customers. After his presentation at an otherwise quiet February council meeting, there was a flood of comments on social media, many ar-

guing the proposed hotel, if built, would fundamentally change the nature of Ocean City, long billed as "America's Greatest Family Resort." In a message posted to the city website Tuesday, Gilliam said he would not back Mita's plan. He said he spoke with Mita about his concerns. "I told Mr. Mita that while I understand the need for hotel rooms in Ocean City, I cannot and will not support his proposal to the council," Gilliam wrote.

Mita said he had heard that council members were also unconvinced. "I'm very surprised," Mita said Wednesday. He said his proposal would benefit the city's businesses and residents, and create a beautiful property that would last for generations. Mita and Gilliam are business partners. When Gilliam was close to foreclosure in 2021, under about \$8 million in debt, he announced the Mita family's investment would keep Gilliam's Wonderland

open. "I'm very surprised," Mita said Wednesday. He said his proposal would benefit the city's businesses and residents, and create a beautiful property that would last for generations. Mita and Gilliam are business partners. When Gilliam was close to foreclosure in 2021, under about \$8 million in debt, he announced the Mita family's investment would keep Gilliam's Wonderland open. "I'm very surprised," Mita said Wednesday. He said his proposal would benefit the city's businesses and residents, and create a beautiful property that would last for generations. Mita and Gilliam are business partners. When Gilliam was close to foreclosure in 2021, under about \$8 million in debt, he announced the Mita family's investment would keep Gilliam's Wonderland open.

Photo by ICONA, Page A2



Section Forest Fire Warden Tom Gerber sets fire to a grassy field Wednesday during a prescribed burn in the VISION DRAGONK, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Ohio senators introduce rail safety bill after fiery crash

BY JILL CARL SMITH AND JOSEPH PUNK Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Two Ohio senators introduced legislation Tuesday to subject federal railroads to more strict safety regulations.

But even so, regulators' actions are the most hazardous. The Rail Safety Act of 2023, co-sponsored by Sen. Sherrod Brown, Democrat, and Sen. Rob Portman, Republican, both parties' dealmakers in Congress, would require the Federal Railroad Administration to conduct safety audits of railroads in high-risk areas, such as those with a history of hazardous materials spills, and to require railroads to hire more safety inspectors. The bill also would require the Federal Railroad Administration to conduct safety audits of railroads in high-risk areas, such as those with a history of hazardous materials spills, and to require railroads to hire more safety inspectors.

Veterans

FROM A1

materials to veterans, so they can obtain commercial licenses to pilot drones, technology that is taking on a growing role in the film industry. She said the program also helps provide mentorship and job training services, helping veterans forge connections in the film and aviation industries. Above all else, Regina said the program was meant to help veterans take their skills to a new profession so they can assimilate back into civilian life. She spoke at length about her experience with veterans on set and how she saw them inspire her while finding a renewed purpose for themselves.

War. After his service, Johnson was shot in his neighborhood in a road-rage incident, losing his leg about 20 years later due to complications from his injuries. His trials have never kept Johnson from moving forward, and he spoke about his experiences, eventually obtaining a commercial drone license and getting involved in the film industry through the Veterans Film Apprenticeship program. "My journey has never been easy, that's one sure truth," Johnson said. "The other sure truth is that it could have always been harder and it wasn't, and along the way I had help, along the entire way."

Retired Army Capt. Leslie Nicole Smith said she served in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2002, where she sustained a near life-threatening injury that caused her to lose her left leg and become legally blind. Not one to be discouraged, Smith connected with Regina and attended an acting class. She said she was excited to have other veterans receive the opportunities she had. "Her encouragement and feedback throughout the class gave me such a renewed sense of confidence and empowerment, and I was hooked immediately," Smith said.

"Criminal Minds" and "The Simpsons" actor Joe Mantegna, an advocate for the Gary Sinise Foundation, said he felt he had a duty to support veterans. He praised the drone program as a way the film and aviation industries could leverage modern inventions to provide veterans more opportunities. "What you're doing, Lisa, and this whole thing about employment is so important," Mantegna said. "This thing about the drones, to work with the cutting-edge technology, and we're going in that direction, is wonderful and smart."

Economic Alliance President Lauren Moore said the alliance's support of the Veterans Film Apprenticeship program was part of a broader effort to strengthen and diversify the Atlantic County economy. He said the federal grant was a promising feature that portended more success to come. More aid is forthcoming. Booker said Tuesday he and fellow U.S. Sen. Bob Menendez, D-N.J., had secured \$4.8 million in federal funding for Atlantic City International Airport to replace two passenger-loading bridges. Regina said she plans to create a television show called "Heroic Episodes" to be shot in the Atlantic City area, adding there are plans to feature some of the veterans involved in the film apprenticeship program. "This pilot, we're hoping, is going to take off, no pun intended, and we're able to secure more funding and continue to have this kind of a program mature and grow," Moore said.

Contact Chris Doyle cdoyle@pressofac.com

We did start the fire

Controlled burns act to head off wildfire season in Pinelands

BY ERIC CORLEIN Staff writer

SHAMONG TOWNSHIP — Using planned burns, state firefighters are working to prepare New Jersey's lowland for wildfire season, which starts in areas to stop them from becoming a breeding ground for wildfires, as well as open up wooded areas, in some cases, to maintain

25,000 acres as it looks to reduce fuel for potential wildfires. So far, about 7,500 acres have been burned. State Environmental Protection Commissioner Shawn M. LaTourrette said the goal is always to protect "life and property." Prescribed burns are a yearly event that includes burning shrubbery and dry areas. The objective is to burn through forest areas to stop them from becoming a breeding ground for wildfires, as well as open up wooded areas, in some cases, to maintain

habitats for wildlife, officials said Wednesday. "This is incredibly important work that we're doing for public safety but also for the forest," said John Cecchi, assistant commissioner for state parks, forests and historic sites. Despite its density, about 40% of the state is considered forested areas, state officials said. About half of the state's residents live in areas within reach of forest areas and prone to wildfires, state fire Chief Greg McLaughlin said.

On Wednesday, a handful of firefighters and officials burned a roughly 7-acre field in an area minutes from Atison Lake. For 15 minutes, the crew, using



Photo by BURNS, Page A2



Actor Joe Mantegna appears on screen behind Lisa Regina, creator of the Veterans Film Apprenticeship program.

Officials tout film, drone programs for vets

BY CHRIS DOYLE Staff writer

EGG HARBOR TOWNSHIP — The Atlantic County Economic Alliance held a news conference Wednesday to extol the growing Veterans Film Apprenticeship program, forecasting how it would expand opportunities for area military veterans to enter the film and aviation industries through the use of drones. The program is being funded by a \$150,000 federal grant. Alliance officials, industry leaders and veterans spoke in person and virtually at the

news conference at the National Aerospace Research & Technology Park, an innovation hub for the aviation industry in Atlantic County. U.S. Sen. Cory Booker, D-N.J., was the headline speaker for the event, having helped secure the funding in Congress. Appearing virtually on a trio of screens hanging over a host of sample drone, Booker thanked area veterans for their service and said they were critical to unlocking the potential of the aviation and film industries in Atlantic County. "We got to build on the economic dynamism. We got to start making sure that our community is ready to seize these economic opportunities that come from it," Booker said. "This is exciting to me. You place your veterans first, our veterans, it has a multiplier effect throughout regional economies."

Lisa Regina, founder of the nonprofit company A Write to Heal, created the Veterans Film Apprenticeship program. The program offers training and study

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New Stockton president

The university expects to name a new leader Friday to replace the retiring Harvey Kesselman. LOCAL A4

Rutgers strike looms

Two unions at the university launch a strike authorization vote. NEW JERSEY A4



Punk in public

Stockton gallery hosts an exhibit on the art of South Jersey and Philadelphia punk. AT THE SHORE, INSIDE



Actor Joe Mantegna appears on screen behind Lisa Regina, creator of the Veterans Film Apprenticeship program. Chris Doyle, Staff Writer

EGG HARBOR TOWNSHIP — The Atlantic County Economic Alliance held a news conference Wednesday to extol the growing Veterans Film Apprenticeship program, foretelling how it would expand opportunities for area military veterans to enter the film and aviation industries through the use of drones.

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Appearing virtually on a trio of screens hanging over a hoisted, sample drone, Booker thanked area veterans for their service and said they were critical to unlocking the potential of the aviation and film industries in Atlantic County.

“We got to build on the economic dynamism. We got to start to making sure that our community is ready to seize these economic opportunities that come from it,” Booker said. “This is exciting to me. You place your veterans first, our veterans, it has a multiplier effect throughout regional economies.”

Lisa Regina, founder of the nonprofit company A Write to Heal, created the Veterans Film Apprenticeship program. The program offers training and study materials to veterans, so they can obtain commercial licenses to pilot drones, technology that is taking on a growing role in the film industry.

She said the program also helps provide mentorship and job training services, helping veterans forge connections in the film and aviation industries.

Above all else, Regina said the program was meant to help veterans take their skills to a new profession so they can assimilate back into civilian life. She spoke at length about her experience with veterans on set and how she saw them inspire her while finding a renewed purpose for themselves.

“I realized if all these veterans on my film set felt this way, then this could have a ripple effect, an impact, on so many more veterans,” Regina said.

The success of the program was facilitated by local economic programs meant to catalyze the aviation business. Economic Alliance Chair Brett Matik noted that Regina and Write to Heal had participated in the aviation-business accelerator program at the technology park. The program, administered by the Smart Airport and Aviation Partnership, helped prepare Regina to launch the veterans apprenticeship program. The accelerator program is funded by a \$1.6 million grant that the U.S. Economic Development Administration awarded to the Economic Alliance in 2019.

“When we first learned about this opportunity, we were excited, because the Veterans Film Apprenticeship program combines aviation, workforce development in a unique way to help those who sacrificed so much for this country,” Matik said.

Air Force veteran Frank Sean Johnson said he served in Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield during the first Gulf War. After his service, Johnson was shot in his neighborhood in a road-rage incident, losing his leg about 20 years later due to complications from his injuries. His trials have never kept Johnson from moving forward, and he spoke about his experiences, eventually obtaining a commercial drone license and getting involved in the film industry through the Veterans Film Apprenticeship program.

“My journey has never been easy, that’s one sure truth,” Johnson said. “The other sure truth is that it could have always been harder and it wasn’t, and along the way I had help, along the entire way.”

Retired Army Capt. Leslie Nicole Smith said she served in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2002, where she sustained a near life-threatening injury that caused her to lose her left leg and become legally blind. Not one to be discouraged, Smith connected with Regina and attended an acting class. She said she was excited to have other veterans receive the opportunities she had.

“Her encouragement and feedback throughout the class gave me such a renewed sense of confidence and empowerment, and I was hooked immediately,” Smith said.

“Criminal Minds” and “The Simpsons” actor Joe Mantegna, an advocate for the Gary Sinise Foundation, said he felt he had a duty to support veterans. He praised the drone program as a way the film and aviation industries could leverage modern inventions to provide veterans more opportunities.

“What you’re doing, Lisa, and this whole thing about employment is so important,” Mantegna said. “This thing about the drones, to work with the cutting-edge technology, and we’re going in that direction, is wonderful and smart.”

Economic Alliance President Lauren Moore said the alliance’s support of the Veterans Film Apprenticeship program was part of a broader effort to strengthen and diversify the Atlantic County economy. He said the federal grant was a promising feature that portended more success to come.

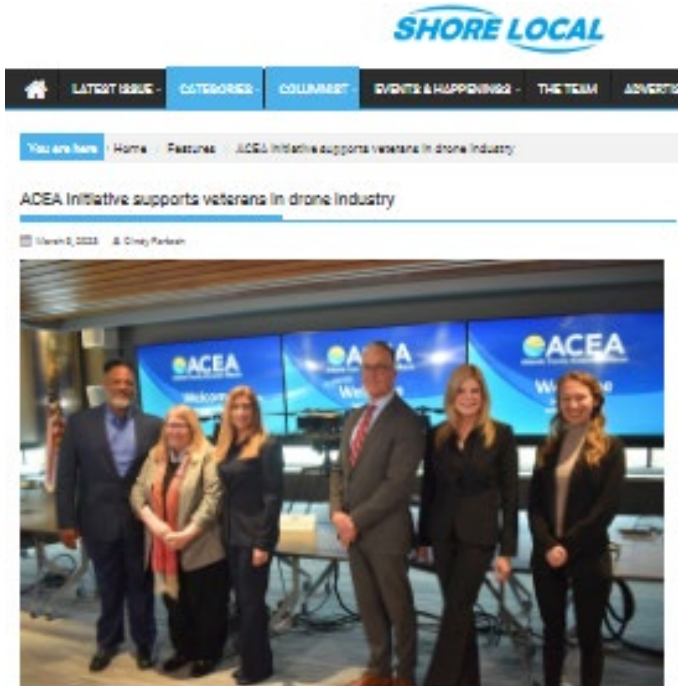
More aid is forthcoming, Booker said Tuesday he and fellow U.S. Sen. Bob Menendez, D-N.J., had secured \$4.8 million in federal funding for Atlantic City International Airport to replace two passenger-loading bridges.

Regina said she plans to create a television show called “Heroic Episodes” to be shot in the Atlantic City area, adding there are plans to feature some of the veterans involved in the film apprenticeship program.

“This pilot, we’re hoping, is going to take off, no pun intended, and we’re able to secure more funding and continue to have this kind of a program mature and grow,” Moore said.

Shore Local
March 3, 2023

Links: <https://shorelocalnews.com/acea-initiative-supports-veterans-in-drone-industry/>



Also on-hand for Wednesday's press conference was Lisa Regina, a licensed drone pilot, filmmaker, and veterans advocate. Regina's non-profit, A Write to Heal, focuses on offering training opportunities to veterans in drone and aviation technologies. She has also developed the Veterans Apprenticeship program, allowing those out of service to seek new opportunities in the ever-growing drone and aviation field. The funds secured will cover the cost of training veterans in receiving their Part 107 commercial drone pilot's license and allow those individuals to seek work in the field of aviation and film, as well as mentoring.

By Staffen Klank

The Atlantic County Economic Alliance (ACEA) announced on Wednesday, March 1, that it has received congressionally directed funding to help veterans enter the workforce. The funding comes in the amount of \$120,000 and will assist veterans in training to become drone pilots and seek employment in the state's ever-growing aviation and film industries. Leaders gathered at the National Aerospace Research & Technology Park in Egg Harbor Township for the announcement.



Joining the press conference via livestream was Senator Cory Booker, who aided in securing funds through the program, which will be administered by the U.S. Department of Labor. "Showing gratitude for our veterans means providing them with the support and resources they need to thrive in civilian life," Sen. Booker said in a statement. "I'm proud to secure funding for ACEA's drone training program to provide veterans with in-demand skills training and job opportunities, as well as strengthen New Jersey's aviation and film industries."



Regina has used drones extensively in filmmaking and plans to utilize them for production of a new television video series called "Heroic Episodes," a new feature to be filmed in and around the Atlantic City area. Participants in the Veterans Film Apprenticeship program will be given opportunities to have filmmaking experience working on the series.



For people, like Air Force veteran Frank Sean Johnson, he is taking his drone pilots experience to the next level. Johnson formerly served in Operation Desert Storm and Desert Shield, and lost use of one of his legs due to complications from a road rage incident twenty years ago. "My journey has never been easy, it could have always been harder." He has since taken an interest in photography and acting and has since obtained his drone pilot's license. "You see more drone activity out there, and this is leading edge stuff and something I want to be a part of."

Retired U.S. Army Capt. Leslie Smith shared her experience with the audience. A member of the 29th Infantry, Smith was flown to Bosnia as part of Operation Joint Forge. She developed a blood clot during deployment and was admitted to Walter Reed. Overcoming a slew of challenges, Smith defeated the odds and survived, all while losing her left leg and most of her vision. In the years since, she followed her heart and pursued acting classes shortly thereafter, a bucket list item according to Smith. "I came to understand that it is truly a gift and a blessing to be given a second chance."

Other attendees included Tony-Award-winning and director Joe Mantegna. Appearing remotely, he shared his gratitude and support for veterans in the workforce. Mantegna shared his involvement in the National Memorial Day Concert in Washington, D.C. in 2002. "That experience really changed my life, and created that hot button for people who have done so much for us."

In a statement, ACEA President Lauren Moore says that additional training opportunities will soon be coming to the Aviation Innovation Hub very soon. The ACEA has teamed up with Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Atlantic Cape Community College, and U.S. Air Force 305th Maintenance Group in a partnership to co-develop the Aviation Training Academy of the Future (ATAF). The facility will be located at Atlantic City International Airport, with authorization for funding recently approved in the National Defense Authorization Act.

More information on the Veterans Film Apprenticeship program and Write to Heal is available online at awritetoheal.com or by calling (609) 468-7474. The program is currently seeking partnerships in the community. To learn more about the ACEA and all their initiatives, go to www.aceanj.com.

Drone Life

March 8, 2023

Links: <https://dronelife.com/2023/03/08/veterans-film-apprenticeship-program-wins-funding-drone-pilot-training-for-veterans/>



News Products Industries Enthusiasts Regulations B

Veterans Film Apprenticeship Program Wins Funding: Drone Pilot Training for Veterans

Posted By: Miriam McNabb on: March 08, 2023

ACEA Receives \$150,000 in Funding for Veteran Drone Training Program

by DRONELIFE Staff Writer Ian M. Crosby



The ACEA's President, Lauren Moore, Jr., introduces U.S. Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ) during a hybrid press conference announcing funding for a program to train veterans to become licensed drone pilots in southern New Jersey.

The Atlantic County Economic Alliance (ACEA) has received \$150,000 in congressionally directed funding for a training program helping veterans to become drone pilots and find jobs in the aviation and film industries. The funding was announced during a press conference held at the National Aerospace Research & Technology Park in Egg Harbor Township, NJ.

"Showing gratitude to our veterans means providing them with the support and resources they need to thrive in civilian life," said Senator Cory Booker, who helped to secure the funding for the program. "I'm proud to secure funding for ACEA's drone training program to provide veterans with in-demand skills training and job opportunities, as well as strengthen New Jersey's aviation and film industries."

The Veterans Film Apprenticeship program was created by filmmaker and drone pilot Lisa Regina, whose company A Write to Heal provides veterans with training opportunities in drone and aviation-related technologies. This new funding will be leveraged to mentor and train veterans to receive their Part 107 commercial drone pilot's license, as well as help them find work in the film and aviation industries.

"We reached out to Senator Booker's office a year ago and submitted a request for \$150,000 to fund this worthy program that will give vets the training they need to be successful drone pilots," said ACEA President Lauren Moore, Jr. "We were pleased that this request was fully funded and put those who served on a career path to success as a drone pilot, a position in demand in filmmaking, search and rescue, real estate, and aviation innovation companies, just to name a few of the opportunities."

Regularly employing drones in her filmmaking, Regina plans to make use of them while producing, "Heroic Episodes," a television video series about veterans which will be filmed in and around Atlantic City. Some Veterans Film Apprenticeship program participants may be offered opportunities to gain experience through working on the series.

In 2021, A Write to Heal took part in an accelerator program for early-stage aviation-related companies. Administered by the Smart Airport and Aviation Partnership (SAAP), the program is funded by a \$1.6M USEDA Innovation Challenge Grant awarded to the ACEA in late 2019.

"We are so proud to see Lisa Regina and Write to Heal come through the SAAP's Aviation Business Accelerator program and create this opportunity for veterans to take advantage of uncrewed aerial systems technologies to create fantastic career opportunities," said SAAP Director Carole Mattessich. "Veterans are a principal area of focus for the SAAP and we are confident that participants in the Veterans Film Apprenticeship will find opportunities with the numerous drone companies that have been a part of our accelerator program."

"The Veterans Film Apprenticeship is a chance for veterans to heal from the traumas of war and assimilate back into civilian life," said Regina. "I am a drone pilot and I went through the [Part 107 drone license] test; it's not easy. So, mentoring and support are important. Once they pass the test, they receive their license, but the program doesn't end there. We want them to be able to make a living, so job placement is a big part of this program. I have many inroads in the filmmaking community and made so many fantastic connections with drone companies thanks to my company's recent participation in the flightPlan Aviation Accelerator program, so we have lots of ways to help these veterans network and find opportunities for work as a commercial drone pilot."

Tony-Award-winning actor and Criminal Minds star Joe Mantegna also appeared during the press conference via livestream to voice his support for Regina's drone/film apprenticeship program.

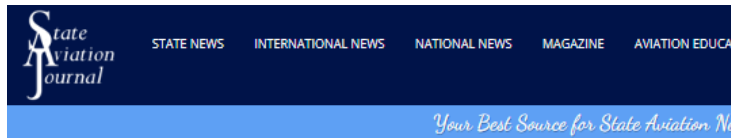
"This training program is yet another sign of the positive interplay between the ACEA, the SAAP, and the NARTP as we work together to build out the southern New Jersey Aviation Innovation Hub," said Moore. "The SAAP's flightPlan Aviation Accelerator program is incubating early-stage aviation businesses like Lisa Regina's Write to Heal to become thriving participants in the aviation ecosystem here. Some of them might even become tenants at the NARTP, where we have just cleared the ground to begin construction on a second building where aviation companies will make advances in aviation research technologies just steps from the FAA's William J. Hughes Technical Center and the smart airport testbed at Atlantic City International Airport."

Moore added that additional training opportunities for veterans will soon be coming to the Aviation Innovation Hub. The ACEA has partnered with Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, the U.S. Air Force 305th Maintenance Group of Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, and Atlantic Cape Community College to co-develop the Aviation Training Academy of the Future (ATAF) at Atlantic City International Airport. Authorization to fund initial design and architectural work on the ATAF was recently approved in the National Defense Authorization Act.

State Aviation Journal

March 5, 2023

Links: <https://stateaviationjournal.com/index.php/state-news/new-jersey/acea-announces-150000-award-to-fund-drone-training-program-for-veterans>



ACEA Announces \$150,000 Award to Fund Drone Training Program for Veterans

March 5, 2023 • Kim Stevens • New Jersey, Unmanned Systems

The Atlantic County Economic Alliance (ACEA) has announced that it has received congressionally directed funding in the amount of \$150,000 for a training program intended to assist veterans to become drone pilots and find jobs in the aviation and film industries. The announcement was made during a press conference held at the National Aerospace Research & Technology Park in Egg Harbor Township, NJ, where the ACEA offices are located.

Senator Cory Booker, who helped to secure the funding for the program, which will be administered through the U.S. Department of Labor, attended the event via livestream from Washington, D.C.

"Showing gratitude to our veterans means providing them with the support and resources they need to thrive in civilian life," said Sen. Booker. "I'm proud to secure funding for ACEA's drone training program to provide veterans with in-demand skills training and job opportunities, as well as strengthen New Jersey's aviation and film industries."



The ACEA's President, Lauren Moore Jr., introduces U.S. Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ), during a hybrid press conference announcing funding for a program to train veterans to become licensed drone pilots in southern New Jersey.

The Veterans Film Apprenticeship program was created by Lisa Regina, a filmmaker who is a licensed drone pilot and an advocate for veterans. Her company, A Write to Heal, concentrates on offering training opportunities to vets in drone and other aviation-related technologies. The \$150,000 in funding will cover the cost of training veterans to receive their Part 107 commercial drone pilot's license and then help them find work in the film and aviation industries, with mentoring offered throughout the process.

"We reached out to Senator Booker's office a year ago and submitted a request for \$150,000 to fund this worthy program that will give vets the training they need to be successful drone pilots," said Lauren Moore, Jr., President of the ACEA. "We were pleased that this request was fully funded and put those who served on a career path to success as a drone pilot, a position in demand in filmmaking, search and rescue, real estate, and aviation innovation companies, just to name a few of the opportunities."

Regina uses drones extensively in filmmaking and plans to utilize them while producing a television video series about veterans entitled, "Heroic Episodes," which will be filmed in and around Atlantic City. Some participants in the Veterans Film Apprenticeship program may be offered opportunities to gain real filmmaking experience by working on the series.

A Write to Heal participated in an accelerator program for early-stage aviation-related companies in 2021. The accelerator program, administered by the Smart Airport and Aviation Partnership (SAAP), is funded by a \$1.6M USEDA Innovation Challenge Grant awarded to the ACEA in late 2019.

According to Carole Mattessich, Director of the SAAP, "We are so proud to see Lisa Regina and Write to Heal come through the SAAP's Aviation Business Accelerator program and create this opportunity for veterans to take advantage of uncrewed aerial systems technologies to create fantastic career opportunities. Veterans are a principal area of focus for the SAAP and we are confident that participants in the Veterans Film Apprenticeship will find opportunities with the numerous drone companies that have been a part of our accelerator program."

"The Veterans Film Apprenticeship is a chance for veterans to heal from the traumas of war and assimilate back into civilian life," said Regina. "I am a drone pilot and I went through the [Part 107 drone license] test; it's not easy. So, mentoring and support are important. Once they pass the test, they receive their license, but the program doesn't end there. We want them to be able to make a living, so job placement is a big part of this program. I have many inroads in the filmmaking community and made so many fantastic connections with drone companies thanks to my company's recent participation in the flightPlan Aviation Accelerator program, so we have lots of ways to help these veterans network and find opportunities for work as a commercial drone pilot."

As a high-profile example of Regina's inroads with the filmmaking community, Tony-Award-winning actor Joe Mantegna, best known for his starring role in CBS TV series Criminal Minds, also appeared during the press conference via livestream. Mantegna called in to voice his support for Regina's drone/film apprenticeship program for veterans.

"This training program is yet another sign of the positive interplay between the ACEA, the SAAP, and the NARTP as we work together to build out the southern New Jersey Aviation Innovation Hub," said the ACEA's Moore. "The SAAP's flightPlan Aviation Accelerator program is incubating early-stage aviation businesses like Lisa Regina's Write to Heal to become thriving participants in the aviation ecosystem here. Some of them might even become tenants at the NARTP, where we have just cleared the ground to begin construction on a second building where aviation companies will make advances in aviation research technologies just steps from the FAA's William J. Hughes Technical Center and the smart airport testbed at Atlantic City International Airport."

Moore added that more training opportunities for veterans will be coming to the Aviation Innovation Hub in the not-too-distant future. The ACEA has partnered with Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, the U.S. Air Force 305th Maintenance Group of Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, and Atlantic Cape Community College to co-develop the Aviation Training Academy of the Future (ATAF) at Atlantic City International Airport. Authorization to fund initial design and architectural work on the ATAF was recently approved in the National Defense Authorization Act.

For more information about the Veterans Film Apprenticeship program, visit awritetoheal.com or call Write to Heal at (609) 468-7474.

For more information about the ACEA, visit aceanj.com or contact the ACEA's Lauren Moore, Jr. at (609) 245-0019 or lmoore@aceanj.com.

LinkedIn: Kathryn Creedy, Editor in Chief at Future Aviation/Aerospace Workforce News

March 5, 2023

Links: https://www.linkedin.com/posts/kbcreedy_acea-announces-150000-award-to-fund-drone-activity-7038977766909759488-gXI2/

Kathryn Creedy • 2nd
Editor In Chief at Future Aviation/Aerospace Workforce News
3w • 🌐

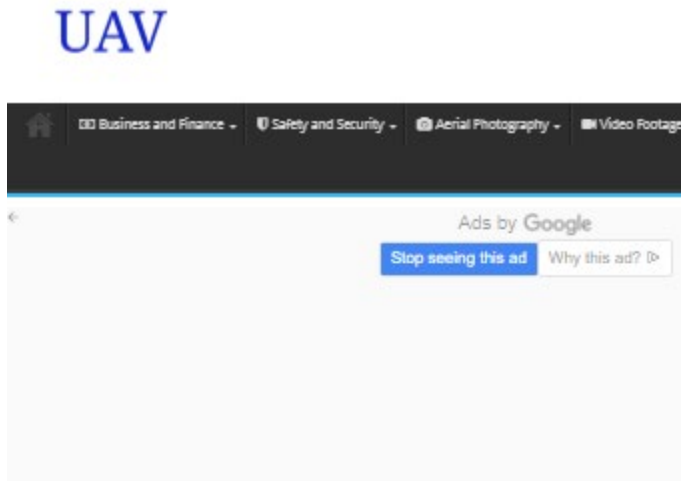
The [Atlantic County Economic Alliance \(ACEA\)](#) received congressionally directed funding in the amount of \$150,000 for a [#training](#) program intended to assist [#veterans](#) to become [#dronepilots](#) and find jobs in the [#aviation](#) and [#film](#) industries. The [#VeteransFilm](#) [#apprenticeship](#) program was created by [Lisa Regina](#), a filmmaker who is a licensed [#dronepilot](#) and an advocate for veterans. Her company, A Write to Heal, concentrates on offering training opportunities to [#vets](#) in [#drone](#) and other aviation-related technologies. The \$150,000 in funding will cover [#trainingcosts](#) for veterans to receive their Part 107 commercial drone pilot's license and then help them find work in the [#film](#) and aviation industries, with mentoring offered throughout the process. <https://lnkd.in/gmxxxBSe> [Ermanda White](#) [Black Women Drone Women](#) [And Drones DoD-SkillBridge](#)

ACEA Announces \$150,000 Award to Fund Drone Training Program for Veterans
stateaviationjournal.com • 5 min read

👍 7

UAV
March 5, 2023

Links: <https://www.uav.org/drone-pilot-training-for-veterans/>



providing them with the support and resources they need to thrive in civilian life," said Senator Cory Booker, who helped to secure the funding for the program. "I'm proud to secure funding for ACEA's drone training program to provide veterans with in-demand skills training and job opportunities, as well as strengthen New Jersey's aviation and film industries."

The Veterans Film Apprenticeship program was created by filmmaker and drone pilot Lisa Regina, whose company A Write to Heal provides veterans with training opportunities in drone and aviation-related technologies. This new funding will be leveraged to mentor and train veterans to receive their Part 107 commercial drone pilot's license, as well as help them find work in the film and aviation industries.

"We reached out to Senator Booker's office a year ago and submitted a request for \$150,000 to fund this worthy program that will give vets the training they need to be successful drone pilots," said ACEA President Lauren Moore, Jr. "We were pleased that this request was fully funded and put those who served on a career path to success as a drone pilot, a position in demand in filmmaking, search and rescue, real estate, and aviation innovation companies, just to name a few of the opportunities."

Regularly employing drones in her filmmaking, Regina plans to make use of them while producing "Heroic Episodes," a television video series about veterans which will be filmed in and around Atlantic City. Some Veterans Film Apprenticeship program participants may be offered opportunities to gain experience through working on the series.

In 2021, A Write to Heal took part in an accelerator program for early-stage aviation-related companies. Administered by the Smart Airport and Aviation Partnership (SAAP), the program is funded by a \$1.6M USDA Innovation Challenge Grant awarded to the ACEA in late 2019.

"We are so proud to see Lisa Regina and Write to Heal come through the SAAP's Aviation Business Accelerator program and create this opportunity for veterans to take advantage of uncreased aerial systems technologies to create fantastic career opportunities," said SAAP Director Carole Mattesich. "Veterans are a principal area of focus for the SAAP and we are confident that participants in the Veterans Film Apprenticeship will find opportunities with the numerous drone companies that have been a part of our accelerator program."

"The Veterans Film Apprenticeship is a chance for veterans to heal from the traumas of war and assimilate back into civilian life," said Regina. "I am a drone pilot and I went through the [Part 107 drone license] test; it's not easy. So, mentoring and support are important. Once they pass the test, they receive their license, but the program doesn't end there. We want them to be able to make a living, so job placement is a big part of this program. I have many inroads in the filmmaking community and made so many fantastic connections with drone companies thanks to my company's recent participation in the FlightPlan Aviation Accelerator program, so we have lots of ways to help these veterans network and find opportunities for work as a commercial drone pilot."

Tony-Award-winning actor and Criminal Minds star Joe Mantegna also appeared during the press conference via livestream to voice his support for Regina's drone/film apprenticeship program.

"This training program is yet another sign of the positive interplay between the ACEA, the SAAP, and the NARTF as we work together to build out the southern New Jersey Aviation Innovation Hub," said Moore. "The SAAP's FlightPlan Aviation Accelerator program is incubating early-stage aviation businesses like Lisa Regina's Write to Heal to become thriving participants in the aviation ecosystem here. Some of them might even become tenants at the NARTF, where we have just cleared the ground to begin construction on a second building where aviation companies will make advances in aviation research technologies just steps from the FAA's William J. Hughes Technical Center and the smart airport testbed at Atlantic City International Airport."

Moore added that additional training opportunities for veterans will soon be coming to the Aviation Innovation Hub. The ACEA has partnered with Embury-Riddle Aeronautical University, the U.S. Air Force 30th Maintenance Group of Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, and Atlantic Cape Community College to co-develop the Aviation Training Academy of the Future (ATAF) at Atlantic City International Airport. Authorization to fund initial design and architectural work on the ATAF was recently approved in the National Defense Authorization Act.

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ACEA Receives \$150,000 in Funding for Veteran Drone Training Program

by DRONELIFE Staff Writer Ian M. Crosby

The Atlantic County Economic Alliance (ACEA) has received \$150,000 in congressionally directed funding for a training program helping veterans to become drone pilots and find jobs in the aviation and film industries. The funding was announced during a press conference held at the National Aerospace Research & Technology Park in Egg Harbor Township, NJ.



The ACEA's President, Lauren Moore, Jr., introduces U.S. Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ) during a hybrid press conference announcing funding for a program to train veterans to become licensed drone pilots in southern New Jersey.

"Showing gratitude to our veterans means