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Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Silver Fox launches into history to collect data around Mount St. Helens

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles ready to gather samples and transmit live images for U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) geologists to further study the active volcano.

MOUNT ST HELENS, WA—Waiting out poor weather conditions two of Advanced Ceramics Research's (ACR) Silver Fox unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) flew test flights Wednesday from U.S. Forest Service Mount St. Helens Johnston Ridge Observatory. The flight operations that lasted a total of approximately 20 minutes readied the UAVs for USGS directed data and image collection starting Thursday, October 21, 2004.

The test flights, still hampered by the weather, followed preflight checks and ground control station position verification and data transmissions. Taking flight from its aluminum pneumatic launcher, Silver Fox climbed to an operational altitude of several hundred feet above the U.S. Forest Service's observatory which is currently closed to the public. The early flight operations verified air to ground exchange of in-flight data, video link transmission and computer controlled autonomous flight profiles.

The successful initial flights were given the thumbs up by the flight team with landings in the empty observatory parking lot. "Now with verified pre- and post-flight information and control programs Silver Fox is good to go for conducting missions in acceptable flying weather," said Jason Douglas, ACR's flight team leader.

The ACR flight and technical support team worked closely with USGS geologists and the U.S. Forest Service to chart the type and duration of missions. With each flight Silver Fox is writing a new chapter in the collection of the gas and solids being released by the active volcano.

Silver Fox was developed and funded under several Office of Naval Research programs. The 58 inch long and 94 inch wide UAV is powered by a four stroke gasoline engine with a single propeller. It can fly in excess of eight continuous hours. Configured with an Infrared and 10x optical zoom daylight camera it will be outfitted with additional pressure and gas sensors with a total weight of approximately 22 pounds.

ACR is a privately owned company located in Tucson, AZ that manufactures state-of-the-art unmanned aerial vehicles and materials for industry, mining, medical, defense and aerospace applications. For more information about its innovative solutions visit www.acrtucson.com.