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SmartSky's patented spectrum reuse radio technology receives FCC certification, unlocking 60 MHz of nationwide unlicensed spectrum for aviation use

The SmartSky 4G network is on track to provide nationwide in-flight connectivity service in 2017

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – Today, SmartSky Networks' patented SmartSky 4G radio system completed the major milestone of receiving FCC certification, clearing the way for deployment of the ultra-fast SmartSky 4G air-to-ground network later this year, with nationwide service launching in mid-2017. Haynes Griffin, SmartSky Chairman and CEO, stated, "After investing tens of millions of dollars and over five years of research and development effort, SmartSky's now certified technology has unlocked enough spectrum to be able to offer, for the first time, the reliable use of a sophisticated, custom-designed 4G system that can deliver an office-like internet experience in the air for both business aviation and commercial aviation customers."

FCC certification is the culmination of work to develop and patent protect the multiple bodies of technology that uniquely enable SmartSky to make use of the unlicensed 2.4 GHz spectrum band, all without causing harmful interference to or receiving interference from the operation of the same band on the ground. Despite the widespread assertion that aviation-related spectrum reuse in the unlicensed band would not be feasible, SmartSky has successfully solved the challenge by implementing new technical methods that are broadly covered by its robust and growing portfolio of 20 granted patents. Additional patents are pending.

Reed Hundt, SmartSky's Vice Chairman of the Board and former Chairman of the FCC, remarked, "Long ago, the FCC authorized the allocation of large blocks of unlicensed spectrum to foster innovation and encourage competition. Today, we see the amazing results of that prescient regulation, which has resulted in ubiquitous Wi-Fi on the ground. By application of novel technologies using 2.4 GHz unlicensed spectrum, SmartSky's breakthrough will finally give the aviation industry the superior connectivity now taken for granted terrestrially."

Roberson and Associates, a highly regarded independent wireless industry consulting firm, investigated the ability of SmartSky's radio technology to seamlessly coexist with terrestrial Wi-Fi. CEO Dennis Roberson, who is also Chairman of the FCC's Technical Advisory Council, commented, "SmartSky's technology solution is transparent to Wi-Fi users on the ground, enabling the air-to-ground sharing of the 2.4 GHz unlicensed band."

SmartSky's technology and patent portfolio is not limited to the unlicensed band. Most of the patents apply to any frequency and any waveform in any high speed air-to-ground network. Because these are broad patents, SmartSky enables underlying technical advances to be incorporated into its conceptual solution. "Over time, this will allow SmartSky to keep pace with the latest advances in computing, antennas, radios and networking while still being protected by our foundational patents," said Griffin.

ABOUT SMARTSKY NETWORKS

SmartSky Networks, formed in 2011, is composed of seasoned aviation and telecommunications executives seeking to transform aviation using disruptive communications technologies. In conjunction with leading aerospace and technology partners, SmartSky plans to roll out its innovative, beamforming based air-to-ground network, SmartSky 4G, later this year with nationwide coverage slated for 2017.

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