

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

July 16, 2020

### **WHIN to Launch Indiana's First Aerostat Providing the Region with Broadband**

**[WEST LAFAYETTE, IN]** Wabash Heartland Innovation Network is planning the launch of an RTO Wireless AeroSite™, home base of the first telecommunications aerostat to be deployed in the United States for rural broadband. The AeroSite™ will support WHIN's research broadband network, covering ten counties in north central Indiana.

Aerostats allow telecommunications equipment to be located at 1,500-2,500 feet, which provides line-of-sight that is better than terrestrial towers. With the AeroSite™ and its Citizens Broadband Radio Service (CBRS) radios, WHIN's research network will be one of the most advanced rural broadband testbeds in the country.

In partnership with its tech partners WHIN will test innovative solutions to make broadband available in areas of its region that are unserved or underserved. WHIN will publish the technical details of the deployment and its regional impact to policymakers, industry, and researchers.

In addition, a LoRaWAN gateway will be installed on the aerostat that will enhance and extend coverage to the entire WHIN region. It's the next step toward fulfilling our promise for full LoRaWAN coverage and helps fulfill WHIN's mission of accelerating the adoption of IoT technology throughout the entire region. The gateways will allow for millions of messages per day to flow through from sensors in agricultural fields and manufacturing facilities, informing decisions that affect the bottom line by reducing costs, increasing speed of operations and making operations more efficient.

"WHIN is committed to ensuring that the Wabash Heartland is a leader in technology innovations for the agricultural and manufacturing industries," stated Steve Hubbard CEO of RTO Wireless. "The RTO AeroSite™ is perfectly suited for rapidly providing thousands of square miles of wireless coverage, enabling many emerging technologies and applications for these industries as well as rural broadband, remote learning, and telehealth solutions. WHIN's dedication to the advancement of the region was



pivotal in RTO's decision to establish an AeroSite™ Technologies team and lease a hangar in West Lafayette."

Aerostats have been used to maintain communications after natural disasters, and by the military, but this will be the first commercial broadband service provided by an aerostat in the country. Right here in Indiana.

**SOURCES:** Alivia Roberts, Marketing and Communications Manager, Wabash Heartland Innovation Network (WHIN): [Alivia@whin.org](mailto:Alivia@whin.org) and Jason Tennenhouse, VP Strategy and Design, Wabash Heartland Innovation Network (WHIN): [Jason@whin.org](mailto:Jason@whin.org).

**ABOUT WHIN:** WHIN is an innovative nonprofit organization devoted to making the 10-county Wabash Heartland region of north-central Indiana the global epicenter of digital agriculture and next-generation manufacturing empowered by smart IoT technology.

**ABOUT RTO WIRELESS:** RTO Wireless was founded in 2015 and is headquartered in Framingham, MA. RTO is a pioneer in aerostat industry and operates the first commercial deployment of an aerostat for wireless coverage. RTO supports AT&T's FirstNet One Aerostat deployments under its Network Disaster Recovery unit. RTO offers mobile voice/data; broadband; backhaul; and pervasive IoT connectivity in a neutral host or shared infrastructure model. RTO is a Microsoft Airband partner deploying broadband services to unserved markets in rural America and is led by executives with decades of experience in the telecommunications industry. Visit [www.rtowireless.com](http://www.rtowireless.com) to learn more.

###

If you would like more information about this topic, please visit:

[www.whin.org](http://www.whin.org) or email [info@whin.org](mailto:info@whin.org)  
WABASH HEARTLAND INNOVATION NETWORK  
1281 Win Hentschel Blvd, West Lafayette, IN 47906