Last month, Cape May County was the venue for successful flight tests by the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) in its mission to utilize unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) to transport goods and essential supplies to areas where traditional emergency responses are difficult or impossible to conduct.

The tests, led by American Aerospace Technologies Inc. (AATI) and its subsidiary company Sky Scape Industries (SSI), were the latest in a long line of operations in which the county has hosted aerial and ground-based technology to analyze and improve economic development in areas.

Cape May County’s airport and location, with water on three sides, is attractive for testing new flight technologies.

The DLA manages the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, 18 combatant commanders, other military services and partner and allied nations.

One of the DLA’s goals is providing food and water to first responders after disasters.

The recent flights tested whether AATI could launch and land vertically carrying a payload consisting of First Strike Pallet (FSP) meals and a case of water weighing 55 pounds.

Flights were conducted into and near the Cape May-Lewes Ferry Terminals in Delaware Bay, a custom-made drone with the term “drone” — took off from the terminal and moved land-based carry to the next takeoff zone.

On its second mission, the new drone carried the same payload to a fast response (FSP) Cape Guard vantage point in the area to support the county’s emergency responders after disasters.

AATI has been a valued member of the county’s UAS Innovation Forum. For several years, they have served as the county’s subject matter expert in UAS. AATI has operated under both the county as a viable local partner and a regional partnership with the Department of State, Division of Travel & Tourism.

AATI has operated under 11 jurisdictions and has completed hundreds of miles of aerial survey and flight technologies.

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The signature fundraiser for the Desatnick Foundation, the Cape to Cape paddleboard race across the mouth of Delaware Bay, was held Aug. 18. The 17-mile race began at the Lewes Ferry Terminal and finished at Queen Street beach in Cape May. The winner was defending Cape to Cape winner Back-to-back Cape to Cape winner Joey Reule and Nate Ernst.

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