



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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# **U.S. ARMY REDSTONE TEST CENTER CONDUCTS ANNUAL HELICOPTER ICE TESTING AT MARQUETTE SAWYER REGIONAL AIRPORT**

(Gwinn, MI) – January 31, 2025 – MARQUETTE SAWYER REGIONAL AIRPORT (“SAW”) The icing testing involving a U.S. Army

Chinook helicopter is back in the Marquette area for the next several months.

The U.S. Army Redstone Test Center, known as RTC, will be conducting icing tests until the end of April 2025.

The Chinook, equipped with an orange boom, spraying water on a trailing aircraft, has been a familiar sight in the skies of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan during the winter months for the last several years, with the exception of the winter of 2023-2024.

The icing system – the ‘orange boom’ – known as the Helicopter Icing Spray System, or HISS – is a system designed to provide artificial icing conditions and is used as part of icing certification for military and civilian aircraft. The HISS creates a controlled-cloud environment through which the test aircraft flies. The effects of ice accumulation and shedding are then documented with onboard instrumentation and photography. This system is the same one that’s been used for years.

RTC not only has the only HISS aircraft in the world, but more importantly, the world’s leading experts in maintaining the aircraft and conducting icing testing. Training for those tests happens in North Alabama by highly-skilled experimental test pilots, flight test engineers, and flight engineers from the U.S. Army Redstone Test Center’s (RTC) Aviation Flight Test Directorate.

Since the early 1970’s, airborne artificial and natural icing testing has been conducted by the U.S. Army in Fairbanks, Alaska; Moses Lake, Seattle, and Spokane,

Washington; and Edwards Air Force Base, California; and in Duluth, Minnesota from 1983 to 2014, until the hangar facility was no longer available. Testing has been conducted in Marquette, Michigan at Marquette Sawyer Regional Airport since 2015.

The Army icing operation has become an annual winter operation at Marquette Sawyer Regional Airport. This operation has positioned the County of Marquette as a key winter testing site for international aircraft manufacturers in conjunction with RTC. Over the years, we've had the privilege of hosting manufacturers from countries like South Korea, Italy, as well as various U.S. companies. This initiative brings a significant financial boost, contributing over two million dollars to the local economy. Marquette Sawyer Regional Airport and Marquette County are proud to support this operation and are committed to ensuring its continued presence in the future.



Cutline: Collin Magonigal, RTC Photographer

Caption of photo: The U.S. Army Redstone Test Center is currently conducting icing testing using the new CH-47F with the Helicopter Icing Spray System (HISS) in Marquette until late April 2025.