



Category: New business Domains

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AEON Retail, JAL, and KDDI SmartDrone Join Forces to Create Next-Generation Stores as Sustainable Community Living Hubs Through Innovative Drone Utilization

~Aiming to implement drone logistics in society for regional deliveries including disaster relief transportation~

AEON Retail Co., Ltd. (AEON RETAIL), Japan Airlines Co., Ltd. (JAL), and KDDI SmartDrone Co., Ltd. (KDDI SmartDrone) are delighted to announce a strategic partnership aimed at revolutionizing the retail sector through the integration of drone technology. The three companies have signed a tripartite agreement to explore the implementation of drones as a means of delivery and logistical support, with a particular focus on regional deliveries and disaster relief transportation.

The initiative is set to commence with a practical verification project scheduled for a new store opening in Shimosuwa-machi, Nagano Prefecture, in 2025, with plans for expansion into other regions in the future.

■ Initiatives

In response to the challenges posed by an aging population and projected logistics issues in 2024, it has become imperative to develop innovative approaches for sustainable store management within local communities, including exploring new delivery channels. Recognizing this need, AEON RETAIL, JAL, and KDDI Smart Drone will leverage the power of drones and digital technologies to optimize and streamline the entire supply chain, from procurement to consumer delivery. This will not only create new last mile solutions, but also provide a unique and enhanced shopping experience for consumers.

Furthermore, the partnership aims to establish a comprehensive transportation system for areas that are currently difficult to access, particularly during times of disaster. As local stores also play a role in providing evacuation sites and transporting supplies to affected regions, the companies will collaborate closely with local governments to explore the use of drones in delivering essential supplies and creating detailed transportation networks.

The initiative also seeks to foster community bonds and promote the development of next-generation stores by cultivating a society where drones play an active role. Through a series of engaging initiatives, such as drone experience events, AEON RETAIL, JAL, and KDDI Smart Drone aims to bring people together at local stores, transforming them into vibrant living hubs within the community.



■ Roles

In this collaborative effort, AEON RETAIL will lead the identification of local needs, develop tailored solutions, and formulate an overarching strategy for OMO (Online Merges with Offline*1) utilizing drones and digital technologies, in collaboration with local governments and relevant stakeholders.

JAL and KDDI SmartDrone, leveraging their respective expertise in drone operations and cutting-edge technologies, including remote control and autonomous operation systems, will conduct research, provide on-site operational support, and coordinate with relevant authorities to ensure the safe and efficient implementation of drone operations.

(*1) Online Merges with Offline

Providing a customer experience that fuses online and offline physical stores



Drone Port of next-generation store in Shimosuwa-machi (image)

By joining forces, AEON RETAIL, JAL, and KDDI SmartDrone are committed to creating a sustainable and resilient future for local communities, redefining the concept of retail and enhancing the overall shopping experience through the seamless integration of drone technology.

Reference

2023-06-02 Shimosuwa-machi and Aeon Retail Sign Collaboration Agreement (Japanese text only)

<https://www.aeonretail.jp/company/news.html>

2016-03-07 JAL and Aeon Sign MOU for Emergency Relief Transport (Japanese text only)

<https://press.jal.co.jp/ja/release/201603/002593.html>

2022-02-22 JAL and KDDI Collaborate to Create Social Infrastructure for Drones

<https://press.jal.co.jp/en/release/202202/006546.html>