

Mendon man's drone business looking up

By **Press** - 24 September 2015



Marty Lachance goes through a pre-flight checklist while circling a small machine looking like nothing more than a homegrown electronics project of wires and parts.

The 57-year-old Mendon resident begins flipping levers, connecting wires and checks if the exposed piece of machinery is ready for takeoff in a sun-soaked field at a Keuka Lake winery.

He steps away before four propellers begin to spin — ripping at the grass like a lawn mower — and then quickly pushes the unmanned aerial system off the ground while a specially equipped camera transmits the takeoff to a nearby mobile command center.

“Whether it’s a bug, a bird or a Boeing, I love it,” said Lachance. “It’s definitely in my blood, (and) this new developing technology was something that always has excited me.”

Lachance is trying to make this his life’s work, being the first from the Rochester area back in July to receive permission from the Federal Aviation Administration to fly an unmanned aircraft for commercial purposes.

He ended up selling his home and many of his belongings to bankroll UAV Imaging Services LLC, a startup that’s trying to get off the ground as the Federal Aviation Administration works to finalize rules for commercial operations for such aircraft.

“There are probably several guys in Rochester that went down to the hobby shop ... and bought themselves a \$1,300 drone and they’re in their neighborhood out in the street going, ‘Wow, isn’t this cool?’” he said. “The hobbyist seems to have an advantage at this. They don’t have a pilot license at stake.”

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