Air Canada Cargo and Air Canada Foundation bring together partners to deliver vital medical supplies by drone to remote island community Beausoleil First Nation

When COVID-19 immersed the world into pandemic, an unprecedented demand for medical supplies exposed vulnerabilities in supply chains across the world. The ability to deliver urgent medical supplies became a global challenge.

Remote communities like the Beausoleil First Nation on Christian Island in Ontario faced an added layer of complexity to maintain the flow of vital supplies such as personal protective equipment. The island community had been using ferry service to bring goods in from the mainland, however service reliability and limiting person-to-person contact, both crucial elements in fighting COVID-19, increasingly became a challenge.

A variety of partners, together, tackled this uniquely challenge by launching a new drone delivery service at no cost to Beausoleil First Nation.

The groundbreaking leap forward was celebrated on October 9, 2020 at Cedar Point, where a drone carrying goods to Christian Island took off and landed. The event began with a ceremonial blessing lead by Chief Guy Monague, followed by a drone flight operated by Drone Delivery Canada. Global Medic packaged cargo with masks, gloves and hygiene kits, as well as test kits and test swabs for fighting COVID-19. The five kilometre flight over water to Christian Island proves that innovative solutions are possible when many creative minds come together.
Media Broadcast or other B-roll from event

Air Canada Cargo represented the Air Canada partners on site to celebrate the occasion.

“We are proud of our association with GlobalMedic and our partner Drone Delivery Canada for working with the Beausoleil First Nation community to provide access to essential medical goods and food supplies. There are over 1,000 remote communities in Canada, many of which are impacted by supply chain challenges,” said Ameet Sareen, General Sales Manager at Air Canada Cargo. “Cargo drone technology is disrupting the global supply chain industry across all industries by enabling a reliable and cost-effective logistics solution, especially in hard-to-reach locations.”

The Air Canada Foundation, which was instrumental in bringing together all the partners, added:

“Our presence in communities across Canada and the world for years now actively supporting health and wellness uniquely positions us to bring together experts to make meaningful connections. The collaboration by Air Canada Cargo, Global Medic, the Pontiac Group and Drone Delivery Canada is the perfect illustration of how we can leverage the assets of all the partners involved for social good,” added Valérie Durand, Spokesperson at the Air Canada Foundation.

Together with other generous donors like OEC Group, the Air Canada Foundation also contributed to make drone delivery to Beausoleil possible.

The flights operated by Drone Delivery Canada offsite in Vaughan, Ontario, will be made possible for at least six months.

DDC’s Sparrow drone solution has a payload drop function that allows a package to be loaded at the point of origin, fly to a destination, hover at a lowered altitude, drop a payload without landing, and return to the point of origin.

The Sparrow has a total flight range of up to 30 kilometres with a maximum payload capacity of approximately 4.3 kilograms (10 lbs) and operates with DDC’s advanced automated and patented FLYTE software system.

The flights are completely operated from DDC’s state-of-the-art operations centre, a 16,000 square foot facility capable of managing 1,500 drones. Last year, Air Canada signed an unprecedented commercial agreement with DDC, becoming the world’s first commercial airline to work with a cargo drone company, giving the logistics community access to the growing potential of commercial drone deliveries.
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