



**CONTACT:**  
Randy Gehl  
Public Information Officer  
563.589.4151  
[rgehl@cityofdubuque.org](mailto:rgehl@cityofdubuque.org)

## **NEWS RELEASE**

*April 20, 2018 – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

### **Drones Allow City Staff to Cover More Ground**

DUBUQUE, Iowa – The City of Dubuque recently began utilizing unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), commonly called drones, as efficient, safe, and effective inspection tools. Several City departments use drones to aid in emergency responses, inspect critical infrastructure, access hard-to-reach areas, and record aerial video for public information efforts.

Over the past year, members of the City’s fire department, police department, engineering department, and cable TV division have passed the Federal Aviation Administration’s (FAA) Small Unmanned Aircraft Regulations - Part 107 exam and are certified remote pilots. Their use of the craft has included pre/during/post-construction inspections, stream bank stabilization/erosion inspections, utility alignment corridor inspections, a count of fallen trees within detention basin areas, project status updates, bridge/structure inspections, and capturing photo/video for public awareness specific to projects within Dubuque.

Drones can provide significant benefits in terms of departments’ safety and efficiency. “For example, when counting the number of fallen trees within a detention basin area, a pilot can survey and record video over a large area in a short amount of time”, said City of Dubuque Engineering Technician Troy Kress. “The video collected can then be analyzed to determine the number of fallen trees within the detention basin.” According to Kress, this same work may have previously taken one field inspector several hours or days to cover the same geographic area the drone pilot was able to cover in minutes.

Another example is using a drone to conduct bridge/structure inspections. Previously, a field inspector using aerial lifts and the appropriate safety gear would be needed to

complete the inspection. Now, a drone pilot can survey and record video of the bridge/structure without any additional equipment, while remaining safe from any type of falling accident.

The City's police and fire departments each have a UAV equipped with thermal imaging. Both departments have staff certified as pilots to operate them to potentially assist with a variety of emergency responses. The fire department used its drone when responding to the large fire at Link Hydraulic off Westside Ct. on Feb. 8, 2018. The police department intends to use its drone for incidents such as area searches for people fleeing arrest and for tactical operations.

The cable TV division uses its drone to capture video of current projects throughout the city for use in programs on CityChannel Dubuque.

# # #

