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Romeoville Fire Department Utilizes Drone, Receives Grant

Earlier in the year, the Romeoville Fire Department was one of 40 police and fire departments in the country to receive a Public Safety Drone Training Grant from DARTdrones, the nation's leading drone pilot school. This grant, which consisted of \$3,500 in free drone training, is being put to good use. Anyone who operates a drone for professional purposes (like the fire department), is required to undergo training and be licensed by the FAA. Fire Chief Kent Adams is a fully licensed drone pilot. This is not the first drone based grant the department has benefitted from either. They actually purchased their drone using money they received from a previous grant.



“We use drones for a variety of operations,” explains Adams. “The list gets longer and longer every day. Pretty much any type of incident we have, we can use the drone to give us some aerial perspective of what’s going on.” Adams detailed a few of these incidents, including using thermal imaging to find hot spots and advancing blazes, fire investigation, search and rescue, and finding victims along the waterways. “In the past we’d need to have Chicago’s helicopter come out and fly the waterway for us because we didn’t have any aerial way of looking. Now we have the ability to do that with our drones.”

Adams says more fire and police departments are moving towards using drones, but it’s still sporadic right now. “I definitely would say we’re on the cutting edge in using drones. We’re involved in MABAS,

which is our mutual aid association, with drones and we also work with Lewis University on drones.” Lewis themselves are a leader in drone technology, becoming the first to deliver acceptance letters to students via drone when they did so in November.

“If you’re in the community and you see us out flying our drones and you’ve got questions, stop by and talk to us,” says Adams. “I’ve had a lot of people come up and I explain the whole drone, what we’re doing, and the technology and people usually like it when they see it.” Keep in mind that even if you are flying a drone for personal enjoyment, there are still rules that need to be followed.

In addition to safety, drones have provided some breathtaking images and video of Romeoville. Keep an eye on the village’s social media channels for a bird’s-eye-view of the community.