

Drone makes first ever delivery to residence in US, say organizers

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Drones may be making deliveries sooner than we thought. In fact, a drone has successfully delivered a package to a residence in Nevada, according to the Associated Press, which could help advance regulations for drone delivery. Drone maker Flirtey and Nevada Governor Brian Sandoval claimed it is the first fully autonomous urban drone delivery in the U.S., the AP noted.



The Flirtey drone makes its delivery

After the six-rotor drone flew a pre-programmed half mile course set by a GPS, it arrived and lowered a package to a vacant residence in Hawthorne, an uninhabited area southeast of Reno, the AP said. A pilot and visual observers were on standby throughout the flight, but according to Flirtey CEO Matt Sweeny they were never needed.

The contents of the delivery were interesting, and bring up an interesting use for drone deliveries. In the package were bottled water, food and a first-aid kit – a sort of make-shift emergency drop, something that could be useful in the case of natural disasters or extreme weather.

"The Nevada delivery demonstrates that advanced drone systems allow aerial vehicles to safely navigate around buildings and deliver packages with precision within a populated area," Sweeney was quoted by AP as saying.

Nevada is one of only a handful of U.S. Federal Aviation Administration-designated drone test sites. Flirtey has relocated its headquarters from Australia to Reno, a move which Governor Sandoval said would not only allow Flirtey to test its tech, but also create jobs. Flirtey has been working on research and development with the Nevada Advanced Autonomous Systems Innovation Center at the University of Nevada, Reno.

Such a successful flight and delivery could accelerate the use of drone delivery. This case could encourage more test flights, which will add to the knowledge needed for the FAA to advance low-altitude drone regulations.

Of course, safety concerns still abound. Drones aren't perfect, and even come with a risk of hacking. Companies are working to advance drone safety, but only time will tell how much impact that will have on commercial applications of drone tech.