



## Drones join pumpers and ladder truck crews as firefighting evolves

*For Immediate Release*

**Vancouver, BC** – Sophisticated drones are joining fire departments across Canada to take their place beside pump and ladder trucks as a vital tool for the job. They are already on the front lines: A large Winnipeg asphalt plant fire last October was contained and extinguished with help from a drone relaying crucial video to firefighters on the ground.

The Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service is one of the first in Canada to be trained by InDro Robotics in how to fly drones into hazardous scenes to give ground crews vital information with minimum risk. Others such as Victoria FD are also in the process of ramping up to train drone pilots.

A [video released by WFPS](#) shows the dramatic fire and the role played by the drone and illustrates how the technology is becoming an indispensable tool for public safety agencies around the world.

“This is a wonderful example of what drones can accomplish in front line service,” says Philip Reece, CEO of British Columbia-based InDro Robotics. “The emergency service drone program in Canada provides 24/7 immediate response to incidents. It’s being rolled out to about 1,000 public safety agencies in the United States and it’s also gaining traction here in Canada. Drones can be used for spotting, as in the case of the Winnipeg fire, for search and rescue using scanners and to back up police in volatile situations where guns are involved.”

The WFPS drone program started in late 2016 with an Innovation Grant from the City of Winnipeg. InDro Robotics, Canada’s leading UAV service provider, trained both pilots and instructors. InDro took the crews through regulatory certification and assisted in finalizing WFPS’ Transport Canada flight operations certificate/NAV Canada processes in late July 2018.

Deployment officially began in August 2018. The asphalt fire was a major test and the drones came through with flying colours.

“Working with Fire, Paramedics, Police and Search and Rescue is one of the most rewarding parts of our company,” said Reece. “We have brought many departments from the initial startup phase through training, UAV equipment selection and regulation approvals.”

WFPS has 18 pilots across four shifts and drones have been dispatched to over 20 incidents since the program launched, flying missions to assist with structural fires, wild land fires, water rescues and to assist the police service.

The asphalt fire in October released toxic black smoke and triggered mass evacuations as WFPS crews and other crews from Springfield, the Winnipeg Airport Authority, Canadian Armed Forces 17 Wing came together to focus on getting it under control before it spread to all four million liters of asphalt and then extinguishing it.

They coordinated the crews with the Matrice 200 drone and Winnipeg police service helicopters Air1 so that the airport and military firefighters could direct their foam to strategic spots to quell the fire “It’s hard to imagine how we would have done this without that aerial perspective,” said WFPS Chief John Lane. “It’s been instrumental in providing really high-quality intelligence that we couldn't have seen in any other way.”

Just two weeks later WFPS called on a drone team to help at a major fire at a [seed plant](#).

“The drone was a ‘game changer’ at both incidents. It provided invaluable intelligence and situational awareness.” said Scott Wilkinson, Senior Academy Officer of the WFPS and the department’s UAV program developer and manager.

“At both incidents the drone was able to provide aerial views that Commanders positioned at distal (away from the centre of the fire activity) locations could never have seen – allowing them to achieve better understanding of the situation, assess effectiveness of resource deployment and tactics, and manage accountability. The level of situational awareness provided by the drone could not have been achieved in any other fashion.”

Chief Lane agreed: “I cannot over-emphasize that the successful outcome of this event came as a result of collaboration, co-operation and having highly skilled and trained personnel.”

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#### **About InDro**

Based in Vancouver, B.C. InDro Robotics provides a full-range of unmanned aerial, water and land services as well as a range of mission specific sensor packages to address the unique needs of the globe's most complex issues.

Our team consists of seasoned drone and manned aviation pilots, Ph.D.'s in remote sensing, GIS/IT professionals, engineers, and other specialists all versed in effective unmanned services who work with a network of partners to compliment our in-house skill set.

Our Mission is to expand the responsible use of UAV technology into new and viable sectors, working with clients to identify and deliver, best-in-class service, products and training.

For more information, see our [website](#) and for images and videos. To arrange interviews, please, contact: [media@indrrobotics.com](mailto:media@indrrobotics.com).