

Drone Deliveries Coming Soon, as Wing Unveils Plans for First-of-its-Kind Trial with FedEx and Walgreens

19-09-2019

Wing Aviation LLC, an Alphabet company, is collaborating with FedEx Express and Walgreens to launch a first-of-its-kind drone delivery service in Christiansburg, Virginia next month. The pilot program will demonstrate the many benefits of drone delivery to communities by exploring methods to enhance last-mile delivery service, improve access to health care products, and create a new avenue of growth for local businesses.

Drone delivery in the United States has historically been limited to small-scale demonstrations on designated test sites, or extremely short flights along pre-planned, fixed routes – all within the visual line of sight of the drone operator. Earlier this year, Wing became the first drone operator to be certified as an air carrier by the Federal Aviation Administration, allowing it to deliver commercial goods to recipients that may be miles away. Wing’s pilot program in Virginia will be conducted as part of the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Unmanned Aircraft System Integration Pilot Program (IPP).

FedEx customers who live within designated delivery zones in Christiansburg, Virginia, and who opt in to the Wing delivery service, will be able to receive their packages via drone during the trial, provided certain operating conditions are met. “FedEx is constantly innovating and testing solutions to meet growing customer needs, and we are excited to add this pilot to our portfolio of first in-kind innovation,” said Don Colleran, FedEx Express President and CEO.

The Walgreens and Wing offering will provide greater convenience and access to health and wellness, food, beverage and convenience products by making over-the-counter

medicines and other items available to local residents for delivery on-demand, through the air, within minutes after they are ordered. The companies will use the pilot program to further explore the future of retail delivery as part of their collaboration.

“Through our partnership with Wing, Walgreens will be the first U.S. retailer to offer an on-demand commercial drone delivery option in the U.S., allowing us to explore another omni-channel offering for the delivery of products and services our customers want and need – wherever, whenever and however they may want them,” said Vish Sankaran, chief innovation officer, Walgreens Boots Alliance, Inc. “With this pilot, Walgreens will be in a unique position to capitalize on the convenience of drone delivery if and when it should expand, with approximately 78 percent of the U.S. population living within five miles of a Walgreens store.”

Also as part of the trial, Wing is working with beloved local Southwest Virginia retailer, Sugar Magnolia, to make a range of sweet and savory treats, gifts, stationery, and paper goods available for local residents to order by drone.

“Wing has spent the last seven years developing a delivery drone and navigation system for this purpose. By delivering small

packages directly to homes through the air in minutes, and making a wide range of medicine, food and other products available to customers, we will demonstrate what we expect safer, faster, cleaner local delivery to look like in the future,” said Wing CEO James Ryan Burgess.

Christiansburg was selected as the pilot location because Wing has been closely partnered with neighboring Virginia Tech’s Mid-Atlantic Aviation Partnership (MAAP) for the past several years.

Source: [FedEx](#)

