

Drone industry expected to create thousands of jobs

According to economic expert, Dr Roelof Botha, the largely untapped drone industry is expected to create 33,000 jobs this year alone. In addition, the total economic output generated by the same industry equates to an anticipated turnover of more than R2bn. This research formed part of Botha's *Economic Impact Assessment of the South African Drone Industry*.



"It is clear after comparing 2015 data to the latest economic impact assessment that the domestic drone industry is expanding exponentially," Botha says.

Training is first priority

But Sean Reitz, CEO of United Drone Holdings (UDH) says there are multiple career paths to consider once qualified as a drone pilot, but training is "priority one" and the fundamental step to ensure the right calibre of drone pilots are produced.

"We would like to grow the 33,000 figure year-on-year. But very little can be done and achieved without the proper training and an enabling regulatory environment. Potential drone pilots need to commit to seeing their training through from RPL to advanced applications in order to succeed and make a positive contribution to the industry and in-turn grow employment levels in this country," Reitz says.

UDH recently launched its RPAS flagship training academy, accredited by the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) and designed to suit all skill levels. The academy is based at the Eagle's Creek Aviation Estate in Gauteng.

Courses

The drone training academy offers both night and weekend classes, as well as one-on-one slots specifically aimed at students with full-time jobs and little to no time to study during the day; but who are interested in pursuing a career as a drone pilot.

Standard courses include six-days of theory and six-days of practical training and flying ranges from 5-20 hours. It takes two to four weeks for beginners to complete a remote pilot license (RPL), and one week for skilled aviators.

“We committed to producing the very best and highly skilled drone pilots, and obtaining an RPL is that crucial first step to a lucrative career and bright future,” he says.

To accommodate the rapidly expanding industry, Reitz says UDH has recently opened its Durban base and plans to launch one in Cape Town towards the end of 2017.

“Endless potential exists in this industry and career paths vary from emergency response and firefighting support to aerial surveillance and even cinematography. It’s our responsibility to develop future drone pilots, grow the industry and create the jobs we so desperately need,” Reitz says.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>