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Drones taking real estate marketing to new heights

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AUBURN, MA Real estate agents across the country have been waiting for the Federal Aviation Administration to release guidelines permitting the use of drones for commercial purposes, such as marketing real estate. Last month, the FAA released its proposed rules, which would allow realty professionals to use drones to aid their clients in marketing and selling properties.

Unmanned aerial vehicles, more commonly known as drones, are aircrafts without a human pilot aboard. The applications for this new technology are varied and numerous.

Property managers are interested in drones' property inspection applications while real estate agents hope to use drones to capture videos and pictures that help visualize and market clients' residential and commercial properties.

"New drone technologies can help real estate agents market homes and properties in ways that were cost-prohibitive in the past," said Mark DiFranco, 2015 president of the Realtors Commercial Alliance of Massachusetts. "Aerial photography and video could someday be an added value that Realtors provide for all of their clients, creating eye-catching listings that stand out to potential buyers."

The new rules provide guidance on the various permits and registrations operators will need to obtain, when and where the drones can be used and the requirements for reporting accidents or injuries. It will likely take two years for the rules to be finalized and go into effect.

Some of the requirements included in the proposed rule are:

- Commercial drones' flights would be restricted to 500 feet in altitude, 100 miles per hour of speed and daylight hours.
- All flights would need to be within visual line of sight of the person operating the drone.
- Operators of commercial drones would be required to pass an aeronautical knowledge test be issued a permit to fly, which must be renewed every two years. This would be different from receiving a pilot's license.

While drones are exciting new technology, until the rules are finalized REALTORS® Commercial Alliance of Massachusetts reminds sellers that real estate professionals cannot use drones to aid in the selling and marketing of properties.

“Currently, using drones to market and sell either residential or commercial property can result in heavy fines for agents,” said DiFranco. “But when the rules are finalized, drones will hopefully become an exciting, new tool to help sellers make their property even more attractive to buyers.”

For more information and updates, as they become available, please visit www.realtor.org/drones.

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