

407 ETR and Mohawk College using drone technology to keep workers safe from live traffic

TORONTO – May 24, 2023 – 407 ETR is collaborating with Mohawk College’s Unmanned and Remote Sensing Innovation Centre (URSIC) to test safer and more efficient ways of conducting visual inspections of overhead structures. Currently, employees physically climb overhead gantries to perform manual inspections while traffic passes underneath.

The collaboration between 407 ETR and Mohawk College began in October 2022 as a pilot to assess the benefits of aerial drones for overhead signage and gantry inspections and is expanding to other applications including bridges and stormwater ponds. Through this work, 407 ETR is identifying if drone technology can operate during the winter season. Inspections are usually conducted in warmer seasons to mitigate hazards associated with winter weather conditions.

Fast facts:

- 407 ETR celebrated 3 million hours without a lost time injury in March 2023 and strives to reduce job hazards.
- Highway 407 ETR has 236 bridges, 204 gantry systems (plate and transponder readers) and 230 overhead signs.
- 407 ETR is expected to complete over 150 manual overhead sign and gantry inspections in 2023.

“Though we’re extremely proud of our strong safety culture, there are inherent dangers that workers are exposed to when inspecting overhead signs. To conduct these inspections, they are at a significant height over live traffic,” says Tony Angelo, Director of Bridges at 407 ETR. “I’m optimistic the research done with Mohawk College will result in new and innovative ways of doing this work more safely.”

“This project has been an amazing collaboration between Mohawk College and 407 ETR, allowing our students to gain hands-on experience as ground crews and drone camera operators, and develop the experience needed for cutting edge technology jobs,” said James Kretz, Mohawk College researcher. “Through this project we’re aiming to reduce the risk to the 407 ETR inspectors, improve efficiency and extend their inspection season into the winter.”

About 407 ETR:

Highway 407 ETR is an all-electronic open-access toll highway located in the Greater Toronto Area in Ontario, Canada. The highway spans 108 kilometres from Burlington in the west to Pickering in the east.

407 International Inc. is the sole shareholder of 407 ETR and is owned by:

- Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPP Investments) through indirectly-owned subsidiaries (50.01%);
- Cintra Global S.E. which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Ferrovial S.A. (43.23%); and
- SNC-Lavalin (6.76%).

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