

FLYING HIGH

Stratos ready to sell a plane designed and built in Redmond



Cliff Ng

ABOVE: Later this summer, Redmond-based Stratos Aircraft plans to go public with its finished product: the 716X. **LEFT:** A look inside the aircraft.



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Commercial airlines have had a difficult few years. Travel restrictions, mask mandates and soaring fuel prices all reduced demand for their services — and made the flying experience pretty miserable for their customers.

But over that same stretch, a group of aeronautics engineers in Redmond had a pretty productive time by keeping their nose to the grindstone, while testing and tinkering on a jet of their own design.

Later this summer, Redmond-based Stratos Aircraft plans to go public with their finished product: the 716X. The single-engine, six-passenger plane will be marketed as a less expensive, more efficient private aircraft.

Carsten Sundin, the chief technology officer for Stratos, said the pandemic restrictions were not much of a problem for the company. They had their funding in place before the first economic rumbles hit — and they weren't yet ready to go out to pound the pavement and entice buyers.

“We’ve been hunkered down,” said Sundin. “We have continued to do what we needed to do on the development side. It would have been far harder if we were at the stage when we needed to have customers traveling to the area to make sales.”

That time, however, is soon approaching. The company expects to start selling their jets in July or August, according to Sundin, who said the final product would be roughly “95 percent engineered and built in Central Oregon.”

Stratos operates out of a facility on Franklin Street in southeast Redmond. It currently has 18 employees, most of whom are longtime veterans of the Central Oregon aeronautics companies, including Lancair and Epic. Their Redmond operation includes both a composite shop and metal shop.

There were issues in the supply chain, of course. Machine parts — especially carbon fiber — became more difficult to find. Raw materials became more difficult to locate and were more expensive. They started to order specialized parts months in