

It's a car! It's a plane! It's ... both?

Redmond inventor ready for vehicle's first flight

BY TIM TRAINOR • Redmond Spokesman

Sam Bousfield has spent hundreds of hours in a simulator, driving and flying his invention. He's driven down virtual highways, flown over virtual mountains and landed on a virtual football field.

Later this month, the virtual will become reality. "At some point you just have to get in the air and see how this thing flies," he said. "That's where we're at right now." The Samson Switchblade,

what Bousfield hopes is the world's first commercially viable flying car, is set to take to the sky for the first time. Whether that happens in Central Oregon or not remains to be seen, as test flights often happen closer to



Photo courtesy Ross Chandler

Sam Bousfield, designer with the Switchblade Flying Car.

sea level. A professional test pilot will have first-flight honors, though the Redmond inventor hopes to take the controls as soon as safely possible.

Liftoff, should it occur safely, will mark a momentous change for his company.

"The moment will be ... hard to describe," said Bousfield. "I don't even know what it'll feel like."

Samson Sky crews have spent years working to design and manufacture a prototype, tinkering with it at every step of the process and rethinking everything from what kind of engine to use to the location of the smallest bolt.

But once the plane goes up and they clear the last few bars from the Federal Aviation Administration, all that tinkering must end.

"We have to put our game faces on now," said Bousfield. "This is a real aircraft now. We have to treat it differently."

WHAT IS THIS MACHINE?

Bousfield can picture it. A customer purchases their

\$170,000 Samson Switchblade and spends a little more than a week working with Samson Sky employees to build it. Once they get it home, the customer parks it in their garage, where it fits neatly alongside their everyday car.

The driver can then hop behind the wheel, throw their bags in the front (front trunk) and drive the three-wheeled vehicle on city streets and interstate highways to the nearest airport. On their way, they can stop at a gas station for a cup of coffee and top off the tank with premium unleaded. Once they arrive at the airport, the customer presses a button, releasing wings tucked below the passenger compartment. They hit the gas, the propeller fires up behind them, and the Switchblade tears down the tarmac at speeds well past 100 mph. It then takes flight, heading off in the direction of a lunch meeting or vacation spot.

A recent customer survey indicated strong demand from recreational pilots, though Bousfield thinks business travel-



Photo courtesy Samson Sky

The Switchblade goes through high speed tests in the High Desert.

ers will flock to it once they see how much shorter travel time can be in the Switchblade. There are more than 5,000 public-use airports in the country, he noted, which opens up a wide range of travel options.

"We wanted to make something that people will buy, something they will want to use .. and is useful," he said.

The Switchblade will need an 1,100-foot runway to take

off and, thanks to its automotive-style brakes, just 700 feet to land and stop.

Many companies have built vehicles that both fly and drive, but Bousfield said none have been practical or able to be mass-produced and mass-marketed. Many required multiple people and hours to attach or remove the wings, which made everyday use impractical.

See **Flying car** / A6



Photo courtesy Samson Sky

The flight test crew goes into action on the Switchblade flying car.

LOCAL NEWS



Wildland fire

Quick attack keeps brush fire at 10 acres. **A3**

Candidates set for November city elections

BY TIM TRAINOR

Redmond Spokesman

The field is set. Let the campaigning begin.

After the filing deadline came and went at 5 p.m. on August 31, we now know the final list of candidates for the November election in Redmond.

Four men will vie for the top job in city government, as George Endicott is set to leave his mayorship at

the end of the year.

Endicott, who has served seven two-year terms as mayor, did not file for re-election and will step down from his post at the end of 2022.

A four-way race to replace him will be between Charles Webster Baer, Ben Schimmoller and current city councilors Ed Fitch and Jay Patrick.

There are also five candidates vy-

ing for three at-large spots on city council. Those seats have a four-year term that starts Jan. 1.

Those candidates are: Branegan J. Dixon, John Nielsen, Kathryn Osborne, Bill Trumble and Cat Zwicker.

Other issues are likely to appear on city ballots including temporary and permanent bans of psilocybin manufacture and therapy. The exact language of those questions is set to

be ironed out at a Sept. 6 city council meeting.

City voters will also have a say in Oregon's three-way governor's race, on the newly-drawn Oregon House and Senate districts that bisect the city as well as the U.S. House race pitting Terrebonne resident Jamie McLeod-Skinner against Republican Lori Chavez-DeRemer.

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WEATHER FORECAST

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Sunny
96/57



WEDNESDAY
Sunny
96/53



THURSDAY
Partly cloudy
86/48



FRIDAY
Sunny
90/54



SATURDAY
Sunny
94/58



SUNDAY
Partly cloudy
90/53



MONDAY
Partly cloudy
85/46

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