

DRI seeds clouds using unmanned aircraft



Drone America's Todd Richman and Kyle Pruett prepare to test fly the Savant sUAS with cloud seeding flares at the Hawthorne Industrial Airport on April 29. Photo/Kevin Clifford, Drone America

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review-Journal

For the first time in aviation history, a fixed-wing unmanned aircraft has successfully tested a cloud-seeding payload during an experimental flight in Nevada.

Flown at Hawthorne Industrial Airport under the state's Federal Aviation Administration Unmanned Aircraft Systems Test Site designation, the Drone America Savant aircraft reached an altitude of 400 feet and flew for about 18 minutes Friday.

The drone – named the “Sandoval Silver State Seeder” in honor

of Gov. Brian Sandoval's support for the state's drone industry – deployed two silver-iodide flares, successfully testing and demonstrating its ability to perform unmanned aerial cloud seeding operations.

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