

# No fly-by-night business



**TAKE OFF, EH?:** Herman Koeslag, owner of Eye in The Sky photography, says his business has really sprung wings during the past few years.

*Photo by Bruce*

By Bruce Hain

**BARRIE — A combined interest in model airplanes and photography has been parlayed into a profitable enterprise by Herman Koeslag.**

Owner of Eye in The Sky Photography, Koeslag says he's been interested in model aviation ever since, "I was a kid."

He formed the company in April 1995, after a 15-year career in "flying, taking it and selling, aerial photography."

"From 1980 to 1990, I sold aerial photography door-to-door throughout Central Ontario."

Comments from many of his clients eventually gave Koeslag the idea for Eye in The Sky.

"One of the common complaints I heard was the comment how far away aerial photos were from the subject and the lack of detail."

After doing extensive research, he decided to proceed with his novel concept. His initial investment in his Heli-Cam and an airborne camera was "several thousand dollars," Koeslag says.

"It was mostly the time and energy in developing the machine and learning what no one could teach me. The most difficult thing was convincing people it was not a toy – but a tool for photography."

The Heli-Cam weighs about 18 pounds with the camera attached.

Since launching, the company has developed a diverse client list, including contractors, industries, tourism groups and operators, private home owners, agriculture and special event venues.

He has clients as far afield as Parry Sound,

St. Catharines and even Ottawa.

Koeslag uses a Nikon camera equipped with a professional lens. He can shoot up to 36 images at a time. The camera settings are pre-set and Koeslag operates the shutter with a remote control.

The Heli-Cam allows the camera to get almost in-the-face of the subject. Other benefits include immediate contact with the client and the fact the Heli-Cam can go into spaces traditional aircraft can't.

Koeslag's most challenging shoot to date, he says, was for Hot Knots of Orillia.

"I flew off a motorized raft that was six feet by eight feet and anchored at both ends."

He laughingly admits to "a few minor mishaps – nothing catastrophic", while on a shoot, and it took awhile to acquire liability insurance for the Heli-Cam. "Safety is the number one consideration."

"There's no licensing or governing body – just common sense."

His fees are \$200 for a first flight with 24 aerial views – \$150 for a second flight. For larger shoots, such as going to other locations, Koeslag will quote a fee.

Marketing has consisted primarily of "just showing my pictures around," he says. "And I've had good media exposure. Plus, it's the type of thing people are interested in. I got a lot of business just being out there and passing out my business card."

The company has a Web site also visit too at [eyeinsky.ca](http://eyeinsky.ca)

With the growth in new businesses and real estate projects, Koeslag doesn't expect to run out of gas in the foreseeable future.

"I've taken well over 10,000 images," to date, he says.