Remotely Operated Submersible

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When Warren County Search and Rescue needed an underwater submersible camera, they looked no further than WKU’s engineering department.

In this week’s View from the Hill, Amy Bingham shows us how that initial piece of equipment has launched into whole new business venture.

Searching for drowning victims, underwater bridge inspections…even cave exploration. The list goes on and on for the uses of a remotely operated submersible. And it’s a talented team at WKU that’s putting it all in motion.

This is just one of three models of the submersible being developed at WKU’s Department of Engineering.

 “The three different models are basic, pro and elite.”

The basic model can be operated with software downloaded on a laptop or desktop computer. The pro-model is more elaborate.

 “ The pro has a seven inch monitor, a joy stick a twelve volt battery, you just go explore.”

Eight students are spending their summer fine-tuning the equipment.

 “We’ve got mechanical students and electrical students, we’ve got computer science students and we’re working with business students to help with the marketing side of the project.”

It’s all made possible through a grant from the Kentucky Science and Engineering Foundation.

The team has until April first of next year to get the models ready for commercialization.

 “They expect us to develop a business plan and so when we get to the end of the funding phase, we’ll be able to say we’re going to launch a business, we’re going to sell the technology.”

In the meantime, it’s still being used for it’s original purpose.

 “Every summer the Warren County Search and Rescue comes to pick up a submersible and use it during peak season.”

The submersible also received the Game Changer award in the Bucks for Bright ideas contest this year, which is sponsored by the Central Region Innovation and Commercialization Center.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

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