



# Enjoying THE FLY OVER STATE

TWO AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHERS SHARE THE JOY OF CAPTURING KANSAS FROM A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

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# KANSAS



ARTISTS DISCOVER THE

ARTS EDITION







P-TN.COM

## Eric Berndt

### *Favorite Anywhere Scene*

Big Sky Country where I maintain a second home to photograph the sheer beauty of Montana's mountains.

### *Favorite Kansas Scene*

I have special memories of a flight near Lawrence where we photographed combines harvesting and unloading wheat alongside farmers working on tractors and cattle grazing the Kansas prairies. (It was, in its own way, a breathtaking scene to an aerial photographer with 40 years' experience who has seen it all.)



## P-TN PHOTOGRAPHY

Forty years ago, Eric Berndt founded P-Tn Photography in Overland Park and has spent the four decades photographing sites both at ground level and in the air. As he suggests, Kansas may not have pretty mountains, but much remains to be seen.

"Flat has its own beauty, and in Kansas, there seems to be so much empty space. In flying over these vast areas, one can't help but appreciate what all is down there," Berndt says. "On the other hand, the Flint Hills, Kansas' version of mountains, are smooth-rolling, beautiful and seem to go on forever."

Berndt jokingly says that he entered the business as a means of feeding six kids, and he seems proudest of the fact that two of his sons, Travis and Timothy, have joined and run the business.

Preferring a helicopter to a single-engine airplane, Berndt is fascinated with zeroing in on a subject barely 200 feet above the ground. "A helicopter allows slower flight movement with less vibration, and it's easy to snap pictures close to the ground," he says.

While fun, a helicopter comes with some pressure to perform as a photographer. "Helicopters lease for between \$350 and \$600 per hour as compared to the going rate for a small aircraft, which is \$135 to \$175 per hour. So, when considering the price of the helicopter, one doesn't want to do a re-shoot," he says.

With a helicopter, the photographer sits to the left side of the pilot and, by using a seat belt and shoulder harness, can lean out the door. Berndt says he can "breathe lots of fresh air and enjoy the sunshine while surveying and photographing one's subject below."

His customers reside in a 200-mile radius of metropolitan Kansas City. While in the air, he will take several hundred photos.

"An aerial photograph is the only way to obtain a reasonable perception of a campus-sized project," Berndt says. "One can stand on the ground at any point within the site and have no clue as to what the project looks like as compared to what an aerial photo will produce." About 75 percent of his company's orders are for aerial photographs of construction sites, with the remaining fourth comprising a wide range of subjects, including marketing photos and new bridges.

Considering the expertise of his trade, Berndt is content to remain here. "We stay in Kansas because our family is here and we love this state and its Midwest values," he says. "When we are traveling, we are always anxious to return home."

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