

Gulf Coast Reporters' League

Louisiana

Mississippi

Alabama

Florida



Vol. III, Issue I

A bi-monthly update of aerospace activities in the Gulf Coast I-10 region

August 2015



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VT MAE has been in Mobile since 1991, and groundbreaking for the "ninth hangar" in Pensacola expected in 2016.

Growth in cards for VT MAE

Groundbreaking for VT MAE's ninth hangar is expected in five months, and it could have 500 workers when fully operational, but there's already talk about an expansion that would double the size of the Pensacola footprint...

Pensacola, Fla.

The president of VT MAE, Bill Hafner, will tell you he's "bullish" about the Gulf Coast I-10 aerospace region, which he sees as primed for growth.

Indeed, his company has had a maintenance, repair and overhaul operation in Mobile, Ala., since 1991, and is in the midst of expanding into Pensacola with a 300-500 worker "ninth hangar." And as if that's not

significant enough, Hafner said there's already talk about a "Phase II" that would double the footprint with a second hangar at Pensacola International Airport.

"The region is primed. It really is looking good for growth," said Hafner, who's been president and chief operating officer at VT MAE since June 2014. He points to Airbus, which will be a big employer, and the supply chain it's bringing to the region, as well as VT MAE's growth.

Hafner expects groundbreaking in January 2016 for the 19-acre Pensacola operation. Between now and then, details about the large hangar are being hammered out.

In mid-July an \$8 million contract was awarded to Phoenix Construction Services to expand the airport's cargo apron and a \$2.5 million contract was awarded to Atkins

By David Tortorano, Editor

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Mighty Singapore



For a relatively small country, Singapore has a large presence in the Gulf Coast thanks to powerhouse Singapore Technologies Engineering (ST Engineering). In addition to the Mobile and planned Pensacola MRO, it has a shipyard in Pascagoula, Miss.

Singapore is among the top 20 foreign investors in the United States. Its direct investment in the United States is some \$23.5 billion, third largest from Southeast Asia after Japan and Australia, according to figures from Singapore.

Singapore is an island in Southeast Asia between Malaysia and Indonesia. It's just over 265 square miles, a bit more than 3.5 times the size of Washington, D.C., and had an estimated population of 5.6 million in July 2014, according to the CIA Factbook.

Founded as a British trading colony, it joined the Malaysian Federation in 1963 but became independent two years later. It subsequently became one of the world's most prosperous countries, a free-market economy with a per capita GDP equal to that of the leading nations of Western Europe.

Singapore, which celebrates its independence day Aug. 9, is important enough that in June U.S. Rep. Bradley Byrne, R-Ala., and Rep. Denny Heck, D-Wash., announced the restart of the dormant, bipartisan Singapore Caucus because of the economic and military ties.

North America for architectural and engineering design for the MRO.¹

Hafner said the two-bay hangar in Pensacola is targeting narrow-body aircraft work. Like Mobile's Hangar 7, it will be able to handle as many as four 757 or possibly six A320s. Informally called Hangar 9, it will be a remote location of the Mobile operation.

Hafner said that when it opens it will have 200 workers, then gear up to 300. With a three-year ramp up, it could have as many as 500 employees when fully operational, he said. The talked about Phase II would double the size of the operation with another two-bay hangar.

There may also more work in the cards for the Mobile operation. ST Aerospace in June signed a deal with Airbus to convert A320 and A321 jetliners into freighters. Airbus sees a need for more than 600 aircraft to be converted in the small freighter range over the next 20 years. The passenger-to-freighter (p2f) conversion work will be done at ST Aerospace's facilities globally, including the United States.

"We have operations in Germany, U.S., China and Singapore. All our facilities will be able to do the A320 p2f," said ST Aerospace President Lim Serh Ghee in a release. The first converted A321 will be delivered in 2018.

Will Mobile do any of that work?

VT MAE at the Mobile Aeroplex has eight hangars and 900,000 square feet of space, and a track record of p2f work going back many years.

"I wish I could tell you with certainty, but it's early on" Hafner said, but added, "We'll campaign for it in a big way."

The Mobile facility is equipped with state-of-the-art CATIA 3D workstations for computer-aided design, and its engineering team partnered with Boeing in the development of the 757-200 passenger-to-freighter conversion Supplemental Type Certificates, according to the VT MAE website.

VT Mobile Aerospace Engineering, part of ST Engineering's aviation division, performs scheduled aircraft maintenance and major aircraft modifications on wide-body and narrow-body aircraft.

Roger Wehner, executive director of the Mobile Airport Authority, said VT MAE is "a huge part of our capabilities

Jobs at foreign U.S. subsidiaries

| state | jobs | jobs rank | per capita rank |
|-------------|---------|-----------|-----------------|
| Florida | 245,800 | 6 | 40 |
| Alabama | 86,400 | 23 | 15 |
| Louisiana | 58,300 | 28 | 42 |
| Mississippi | 34,100 | 36 | 39 |

Source: Organization for International Investment

set." He said that of late, VT MAE has helped the airport authority compete on several projects.

If statistics are any indication, investments like those of VT MAE, Airbus and suppliers are likely to continue. According to investment tracking service fDi Markets, the United States will remain a target region, particularly in the field of aerospace

Over the past five years, North America has attracted the most aerospace investment of any global region, with the U.S. the leading destination country, according to fDi Markets.

Between January 2009 and March 2015, a total 841 FDI aerospace projects were recorded by fDi Markets, an estimated capital investment of \$42 billion with an average investment of \$50 million per project.

In an fDi Markets list of the top "states," where the state is a region or province of a country, Florida ranks 9th in the world with 16 aerospace projects between January 2009 and March 2015. It's the only U.S. state in the top 10.

The U.S. subsidiaries of foreign companies employ 5.8 million Americans. With an annual payroll of \$456 billion, they pay U.S. workers an average of \$78,927, more than 33 percent higher than the economy-wide average, according to the Organization for International Investment.

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¹ [Pensacola International Airport, hotel projects moving forward](#), Pensacola News Journal, Will Isern, July 16, 2015.

Trend

Cluster helps engineer Mobile's future

A growing aerospace-focused engineering hub at the Mobile Aeroplex is a major development resulting from the first Airbus jetliner assembly line being built in the United States...

Mobile, Ala.

Phil Gurvitz doesn't hedge when asked why France's AKKA Technologies decided to set up shop not far from where Airbus will assemble U.S.-built jetliners.

While AKKA's initial staffing will be small, Gurvitz sees a bright future for aerospace engineering at the Mobile Aeroplex, which he sees as being in the "perfect position" for growth.

"I believe this will really develop exponentially," Gurvitz said. "We have the rails, we have the interstates, we're right on the sea. I believe there's nothing holding it back."

Mobile's nascent aerospace engineering cluster started getting attention a few months ago when the Mobile Airport Authority announced that three more engineering companies would set up shop at the Aeroplex.

Roger Wehner, executive director of the Mobile Airport Authority, sees a bright future for the cluster at the 1,700-acre Aeroplex. "We think the engineering support will grow here," he said, especially industrial engineers, who are in "big demand" in the local aerospace industry.

Engineers in the Gulf Coast region involved in aerospace activities have historically clustered near Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., where aerial weapons are developed, Stennis Space Center, Miss., where propulsion systems are tested, and Michoud Assembly Facility, New Orleans, where spacecraft are fabricated.

By Matt Irvin



Graphic by Ron Stallcup

Mobile has engineers, including aerospace at Continental Motors, but most of the engineers are civil and industrial. There's also a concentration of marine engineers and naval architects that's above the national average, with a location quotient of 12.79.¹

But the arrival of Airbus Engineering Center in 2007 signaled the possible growth of the aerospace engineering sector. It opened with just 35 employees, but today has over 200.

Then the Safran Group, another of the world's top 10 aerospace and defense companies, announced in December 2012 that it would open a \$2 million center at the Aeroplex.

Safran Engineering produces wiring solutions for Airbus and other companies in the aerospace industry. Clients include Boeing, Bombardier, Embraer, Dassault, Eurocopter, Lockheed Martin and Raytheon. Safran Group also has a long-term relationship with GE, developing and producing jet engines for civil aviation.

Even though it has yet to occupy its new office space in Mobile, Safran's footprint at the Aeroplex promises to grow. In mid-June, a Safran company,

Messier-Bugatti-Dowty – a world leader in aircraft landing gear and braking systems – announced it will open an office and workshop in Mobile to support the A320 assembly line. Safran USA spokeswoman Michelle Lyle said MBD would begin operations in September, and she hinted at an even greater Safran presence.

When the new Safran building opens in Mobile, it "will house MBD and several other Group companies that will also contribute to the (Airbus A320) program.

"This decision reflects Safran's commitment to support customers locally and expand our relationship with Airbus," Lyle said by email. "Safran's presence in this major aviation hub is in line with its strategy to be close to customers in the U.S. and the world."

But it's the engineering cluster that's drawing attention. In Alabama, Huntsville is the leader by far for aerospace engineers, with more than 3,000 and a location quotient of 28.49.²

But Mobile is in the game.

AKKA Technologies, Sonovision and Inter-Informatics were lured to the

(Continued on page 4)

Aeroplex thanks to prior relationships with Airbus and because the aerospace campus was able to set them up in its engineering incubator. By sharing facilities like a reception area and office equipment, they'll be able to keep costs down prior to expansions.

AKKA's Gurvitz said his company has had a long-term relationship as a primary subcontractor for Airbus, so when the plane-maker announced it would launch an assembly line in Mobile, it asked the AKKA to also open on the Gulf Coast.

"The incubator was a big draw," said Gurvitz, Southeast Region Program Leader for AKKA Technologies Group North America.

AKKA, headquartered in Paris, performs a range of engineering work for Airbus, including upgrade services, research and development, maintenance paperwork management, specifications work and project management. Though the Mobile office has only a small contingent for now, Gurvitz said, the local team works closely with all the European offices.

"We get work out of Hamburg (Germany) and Mobile," he said, and that relationship is two-way. Depending on workload, certain aspects of projects may be handled out of the offices of either city.

Indeed, this is one of the advantages of industrial clusters. The ability to work with partners can ease workload, solve problems more quickly and drive innovation. David Trent, site director of the Airbus Engineering Center in Mobile, said having partners with similar capabilities in close proximity can enhance the climate for major projects.

"From time to time we resource specific work to companies like these for various reasons, including stretched internal resources or needing a specific capability," said Trent, leader of a facility that employs more than 220 engineers in support of several Airbus projects, including the company's newest

| Aerospace engineers | | | |
|---|-------|-----------|-------------------|
| state | jobs | per 1,000 | location quotient |
| Alabama | 3,550 | 1.913 | 3.74 |
| Florida | 2,580 | 0.337 | 0.66 |
| Louisiana | 90 | 0.044 | 0.09 |
| Mississippi | 80 | 0.074 | 0.15 |
| Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, May 2014. | | | |

plane, the A350 XWB, and the A380, the world's largest commercial airliner.

While the A320 line was a powerful reason for these companies to come to the Gulf Coast, the region's ever-expanding aerospace industry made coming here an attractive proposition.

"It is important to remember that Airbus is not the only customer in Mobile," Trent said. "Having a cluster of engineering consulting firms in the area does enhance Mobile's aerospace community, and as a result, we are all benefiting," he said.

As one example, Gurvitz said AKKA is about to engage in a project with Continental Motors at the Aeroplex. He said his company also does work for other major aerospace companies, including Boeing and Northrop Grumman, both of which have operations in the Gulf Coast.

In addition to aerospace, AKKA works in major industries including automotive, railways, defense, pharmaceuticals, energy and telecom. The company's subsidiary, Mercedes Benz Technology, has offices in various states, including Tuscaloosa, Ala., supporting the automotive industry.

The Sonovision Group works in the fields of logistics and document engineering. With headquarters in the Paris suburb of Bagneux, it has operations in France and seven other countries. It works with clients in aerospace, transportation, defense and energy. Sonovision provides project management support, technology risk management, engineering and production of maintenance tools, technical document engineering and language engi-

neering, such as translations and presentations, and multilingual project management.

Inter-Informatics is an engineering and design consultancy with headquarters in Prague, Czech Republic. The company's varied offerings include expertise in aerospace, information technology and railway vehicles and machinery.

Its aerospace division works on aircraft interior design and engineering, with services that include concept and detail design, development, customization and upgrades, stress analysis, manufacturing and installation support. Other services include airframe design and stress justification and documentation with both metallic and composite structures; electrical subsystem integration and design, and avionics installation; and tool and jig designs for aircraft manufacturing.

The company has worked with Airbus since 2000. Inter-Informatics has offices in several countries, mainly in Europe. The Mobile Aeroplex office is one of two in the United States; the other is in Miami.

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¹ Location quotient indicates the concentration of an occupation employment compared to the national average concentration. A quotient greater than 1 indicates a share higher than the U.S. average. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, May 2014.

² BLS, May 2014.

Airbus Engineering Center: airbus.com

251-434-7200

Safran: safran-group.com

703-351-9898

AKKA Technologies: akka.eu

251-405-0097; 205-632-8520

Sonovision: sonovisiongroup.com

623-455-9132

Inter Informatics: inter-informatics.com

251-434-4299

Company profile - Selex Galileo

Selex Galileo in the right place to grow

If growth and a backlog of work are any indication, then Selex Galileo made a wise decision seven years ago when it set up shop at Stennis International Airport in South Mississippi...

Kiln, Miss.

For a company that works on large, loud, multi-engine military aircraft, it's helpful to be in a place where engines can be run at any time day or night without any complaints from neighbors.

But that's precisely what Selex Galileo can do at its two-hangar South Mississippi operation located within the massive acoustical buffer zone of NASA's Stennis Space Center.

"We can fly at night, 24/7 all year long," said site director Tommy Ruiz. "There are no noise issues. I can run engines at 2 o'clock in the morning."

And when you're a growing operation with a backlog of business, that kind of flexibility is a good thing.

Selex Galileo Inc. opened its aircraft modification operation in a leased hangar at Stennis International Airport, just outside Stennis Space Center in the town of Kiln in 2008 for a contract to modify U.S. Coast Guard aircraft.

Business at the South Mississippi location has been growing ever since, and so has its footprint at the Hancock County-owned airpark, said Ruiz.

"In 2012 we expanded and built an additional large facility capable of supporting two cargo aircraft at the same time. More recently, we leased the new fixed base operator hangar from the Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission for some of the smaller aircraft modifications," Ruiz said.

"We have also custom-built a state-of-the-art support facility that is used

By Lisa Monti



Above, a U.S. Coast Guard C-130 sits in the hangar to be upgraded with the AIU glass cockpit. The photo to the right shows the cockpit after the modification.

for training operations, as well as an emergency response center," he said.

Selex Galileo is just one of the big aerospace companies with operations in Hancock County. Lockheed Martin, Aerojet Rocketdyne and Rolls-Royce have facilities at Stennis Space Center.

Italy's Finmeccanica, one of the world's top 10 aerospace and defense companies, owns Selex Galileo. It's part of Selex ES, which has major facilities in Italy and the United Kingdom. The aircraft modification business is new to the company, which entered into the market less than 10 years ago.

Selex Galileo's primary focus at the Stennis International Airport/Airpark is avionics systems integration on various types of legacy aircraft. "We put in a new radar or sensor, or a communications system so the aircraft has increased capability to perform whatever mission it has," Ruiz said.

Depending on the customer's needs, employees can perform every step of the upgrade process, from design and manufacture to installation and testing.



"In addition, we have a state-of-the-art training facility where customers come in and perform real-time missions," he said. It also serves as a self-contained emergency response center in case of hurricanes.

The airpark portion of the airport is within the acoustical buffer zone that surrounds NASA's Stennis Space Center. NASA acquired the land in the 1960s when the space center was built to test Saturn V rockets for the Apollo lunar landing program.

In addition to allowing work at all hours, another benefit of the location is its international status, which makes it convenient for foreign customers to fly in and out.

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Photo courtesy Selex Galileo

Workers put a new NP2000 eight-blade propeller on a C-130 as part of the Electronic Propeller Control System (EPCS) upgrade. The propeller replaces the four-blade system for much better performance.

“It doesn’t have commercial traffic, just private or military aircraft, and accessibility is good ... It’s a prime location with the county’s harbor and rail access.”

Ashley Edwards, executive director of the Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission, said Selex Galileo is “exactly the type of high-tech aerospace industry that we want in Hancock County,” a major asset and world leader in the maintenance, repair and overhaul segment of the aerospace and aviation sector.

“Their presence in Hancock County has allowed us to market ourselves to other firms who work in synergy with Selex. They have served as a central puzzle piece in our ongoing effort to build a successful MRO cluster in Hancock County.”

Aircraft modification work can take one or two months, but some jobs can require almost a year.

“We do about 15 aircraft a year today, but could easily handle up to 35 depending on the size and scope of the modifications and aircraft availability,” he said.

Most of the aircraft are for military customers, but Selex has commercial customers as well. “If it flies, I’ll work on it,” he said.

The number of technicians and engineers working at Selex fluctuates with contracts and the scope of work. The company does not release employment numbers, but said that most come from the Gulf Coast area.

“We have found a significant skill set in the area,” Ruiz said, “in part because of nearby Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi and neighboring Stennis Space Center.”

Ruiz said Selex works with nearby schools to develop curriculum that will help ensure workers for the future.

“I have had numerous visits from classes from Hancock High School where we explain what we do and what you need to learn in order to work on aircraft,” he said.

Selex often relies on the numerous local machine and fabrication shops to produce the upgrade kits. “I’ve been surprised at the number of them in this area,” Ruiz said. Spreading the work around helps Selex keep costs down

and it provides an economic boost to the nearby communities.

Ruiz said his current focus is providing customers the type of systems they want in their aircraft. “We have a nice backlog over the next couple of years, but we are focusing now on our delivery and execution to make sure what we deliver is produced with quality and on time,” he said.

Another challenge is keeping up with rapid changes in technology. “How fast is that technology train moving?” he said. “The technology in this world today, especially in the aerospace industry, is changing really on a daily basis. By the time we are installing it, they already have options to upgrade.”

As technology continues to evolve, Selex will work to maintain its competitive edge. “We’ve done a lot of radar and sensor modifications over the last couple of years and in the future we are looking at upgrading cockpits to touch screen displays for better crew comfort and awareness,” Ruiz said.

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U.S. corporate HQs: Arlington, Va.

Local operation: Selex Galileo Inc.

Location: 7095 Roscoe-Turner Rd., Kiln, Miss. 39556

Established: 2008

No. of local workers: not available

Focus areas: aircraft modification; avionics systems integration; special operations training; disaster recovery

Types of workers: technicians, engineers

Employment information: 228-467-2000;

www.selexgalileo.com; or e-mail

humanresources@selexgalileoinc.com

Note: Finmeccanica also owns DRS Training & Control Systems, Fort Walton Beach, Fla.

Company profile - Boeing

Boeing operations special for the region

Boeing 100 years ago supplied planes for fledgling Navy fliers, and today its Northwest Florida operation is expanding its role of keeping U.S. warplanes the most up-to-date in the world...

Fort Walton Beach, Fla.

The Boeing name resonates in the world of business. The largest aerospace company is a huge player in the commercial aircraft, defense and space industries, and its presence in a community is a magnet that says a lot about the tech-savvy nature of an area.

For 20 years now, Boeing has been a part of the Panhandle's Fort Walton Beach. It's one of four locations in the state that Boeing considers a hub for its Florida workforce of 1,400.

And its footprint here is growing.

In addition to the Boeing SOF building at Fort Walton Beach Commerce and Technology Park, the company recently opened the nearby 83,000-square-foot Boeing Aircraft Modernization and Sustainment Facility.

"Boeing is a name that is synonymous with excellence, and with Boeing choosing to expand its Fort Walton Beach footprint, it certainly speaks volumes about our community's ability to accommodate a company of this caliber," said Nathan Sparks, the executive director of the Okaloosa County Economic Development Council.

"The addition of more highly skilled, high-wage jobs to our local economy is the direct benefit, and one that we greatly appreciate, but the vote of confidence from a company viewed by many as the gold standard of the global aerospace sector is especially noteworthy," Sparks said.

By Tom McLaughlin



Photos courtesy of Boeing

Boeing SOF has been a fixture in Fort Walton Beach, Fla., for 20 years. Its multi-story building at the City of Fort Walton Beach Commerce and Technology Park, which focuses on aircraft used by Air Force Special Operations, has now been joined by a new operation at an 83,000-square-foot building on Hill Drive. The Boeing Aircraft Modernization and Sustainment Facility also will focus on keeping aircraft up-to-date, but in addition will repair and construct wiring for the big aircraft and repair hydraulic landing gear. It also will have a Technical Capabilities center that will develop manuals for Boeing and non-Boeing systems.



Boeing came to Fort Walton Beach two decades ago, drawn to the area by Eglin Air Force Base, a huge base where conventional airborne weapons are developed and tested, and Hurlburt Field, home of the U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command. The Crestview-Fort Walton Beach-Destin metro area has a high concentration of scientists and technicians involved in defense-oriented research, development, test and evaluation. Indeed, its concentration of avionics technicians alone is nine times the national norm.¹ It has a healthy supply of Air Force

and Navy retirees to offer as potential employees.

The Boeing Special Operations Forces organization has been here since the mid-90s and is a major anchor of the tech park. The skilled workers there focus on the multiple, specialized aircraft used by the highly active Special Operations forces. Over the years the Boeing unit has secured millions in government contracts to do work at Eglin, Hurlburt Field and other locations. It's this work with Special Forces that inspired Boeing recently to expand

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Strong ties to Florida

It was nearly 100 years ago that Boeing and Florida struck up a relationship. In 1917 two new seaplanes built by fledgling Boeing were shipped by rail to the equally new air station at a Navy base in Pensacola. The Navy liked the Boeing Model C and bought 50 more to train pilots.

Today the ties between Boeing and Florida are deep, with some 1,400 Boeing workers doing a range of jobs, from repairing Navy F-18s to building a new generation of spacecraft and training commercial pilots.

The company, founded in 1916 in Seattle, is the world's largest aerospace company, second-largest defense contractor and largest exporter in the United States by dollar value. It builds commercial jetliners, military aircraft, satellites and missile defense systems. It also provides airplane financing and leasing services to both commercial and military customers. It's No. 30 in the Fortune 500, with annual revenues of \$90.76 billion.

Its most high profile activity in Florida is at Kennedy Space Center, where it's building the Crew Space Transportation (CST-100) system at the former Orbital Processing Facility No. 3 (OPF-3). The site is also headquarters for Boeing's Commercial Crew Program.

- David Tortorano

operations in Fort Walton Beach a second building.

Boeing announced on July 1 that it had purchased the Edwin Watts Golf warehouse at 20 Hill Drive and turned it into an aircraft modernization and sustainment facility.

The primary mission at the new building, like the older location, is keeping the aircraft flying out of Hurlburt, the AC-130U and the CV-22 Osprey, functioning at peak capacity, according to Hank Sanders, Boeing's director of Special Operations Forces Programs.

The big sustainment job at the new location is repairing and constructing wiring that runs through aircraft, Sanders said. But with the additional room available at the new facility, Boeing has plans to do other things.

Sanders said that hydraulic repairs on the weapons (guns) that are employed by the AC-130 gunships, as well as the landing gears for the F-15 fighter, will be undertaken at the new facility.

He said the Hill Drive location will house a Technical Capability Center at which technical manuals will be developed for Boeing and non-Boeing systems. Boeing puts together technical manuals for nine aircraft, including the C-130, F-15, QF-16, Italy's KC-767, and the Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD).

While Sanders said the work Boeing does is funded primarily by existing government contracts, the company is "constantly planning for growth." The building on Hill Drive will employ engineers and technicians and house laboratories and an expanded repair center, but there should be blue collar job opportunities as well. The former home of Edwin Watts will afford Boeing critical warehouse space.

Sanders said parts for F-15s and AC-130s flown by the U.S. and its allies across the globe will be stored in Fort Walton Beach.

"We will provide warehouse space for all activities Boeing supports in this area," Sanders said.

Statewide, Sanders said, Boeing does over \$1 billion in business annually, primarily at locations in Fort Walton Beach, Titusville, Jacksonville and near the Kennedy Space Center.

"We as a community could not ask for a better community leader to be one of our most famous businesses," said Ted Corcoran, president of the Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce.

Along with its business footprint, Boeing serves as one of Northwest Florida's corporate benefactors.

Sanders said the company contributes millions annually to support education and the environment and offered as an example a recent excursion by over 100 company volunteers to a beach in nearby Destin, where the group collaborated to clean up four miles of beach.

"Boeing is a very unique business in our community," Corcoran said. "They go about their business very quietly. Most of our residents and visitors are not their customer, and probably don't even know they are here.

"But they always commit much time and energy investing in our community. As a company they are sponsors of many worthwhile endeavors, and their employees participate on most of the major fundraisers in the community," Corcoran said. "They simply go about their business, employing hundreds of our friends and neighbors, yet ask nothing in the process."

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¹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, May 2014.



Company: The Boeing Company
Corporate HQs: 100 N. Riverside, Chicago
Local operations: Boeing SOF and Boeing Aircraft Modernization and Sustainment Facility

Locations: 626 Anchor St. NW and 20 Hill Ave. NW, both Fort Walton Beach, Fla. 32548.

No. of local workers: company does not release figures for individual facilities, but Boeing employs about 1,400 in Florida

Local focus areas: sustainment of AC-130U and CV 22 aircraft at Hurlburt Field; technical manual development for nine aircraft and one defense system; repair of hydraulic equipment like landing gear, wiring repair, storage of parts for wide range of aircraft.

Types of workers: engineers, technicians, warehouse staff

Employment: <http://boeing.com> or (866) 473-2016

Note: In the Gulf Coast I-10 region, Boeing in New Orleans is building the core stage of NASA's Space Launch System.