Boeing Launches Modification Center for Tactical Aircraft

The Boeing Company is expanding its growing military Aerospace Support business by establishing a new modification and upgrade center for tactical aircraft in Jacksonville, Fla. The Boeing Aerospace Support Center - Cecil is located at Naval Air Station Cecil Field.

The new Boeing center will focus initially on modification of U.S. Navy F/A-18 Hornet aircraft. The first aircraft will arrive this week for avionics upgrade work under the Miniaturized Airborne GPS Receiver program. The center also will perform selective maintenance and modification activities on Naval Reserve F/A-18s and provide other services in support of the U.S. Navy. Northrop Grumman Corp., principal subcontractor on the F/A-18 program, will also perform work on these programs at its facility at Cecil Field. Potential future programs include work on other military tactical aircraft.

"Aerospace Support is a very important and growing area of our business. The modification and upgrade center at Cecil Field is a significant step for us in the tactical aircraft segment of this market," said Mike Sears, president of the Boeing Military Aircraft and Missile Systems Group.

"The Boeing Aerospace Support Center - Cecil represents an expansion of our highly successful military maintenance and modification capabilities, and a continuation of our focus on total life-cycle customer support," said Jim Restelli, vice president and general manager of Aerospace Support, part of the Boeing Military Aircraft and Missile Systems Group. "Our centers in San Antonio, Texas; Wichita, Kan.; and Shreveport, La., have set the standard for affordable, fast-turnaround, high-quality maintenance and modification services for large missionized aircraft. I'm confident our new facility in Jacksonville will do the same for tactical aircraft.

"Our plans include a partnership with the Naval Aviation Depot in Jacksonville to complement capabilities and reduce redundancies so we can provide our Navy customers the best value," Restelli said. "Our previous experience with partnerships with Department of Defense depots, such as our relationship with the Ogden Air Logistics Center, which resulted in the successful acquisition of the KC-135 programmed maintenance program, demonstrates the benefits of public-private partnerships."

The new Boeing facility at Cecil Field includes almost 134,000 square feet of hangar, maintenance and office space, along with 200,000 square feet of aircraft ramp space. Boeing has leased the facility for up to 20 years from the Jacksonville Port Authority.

It's expected the Boeing Aerospace Support Center - Cecil will employ between 150 and 300 people by the year 2003. Northrop Grumman expects to employ up to 200 employees at its facility adjacent to the Boeing center.

Naval Air Station Cecil Field, which will close this fall and be turned over to the Jacksonville Port Authority, previously was home to the Navy's Atlantic Fleet F/A-18 Hornet squadrons.

"As the Navy's principal aircraft manufacturer, we and our partner Northrop Grumman are committed to reducing the Navy's life-cycle costs for their tactical aircraft modification and support needs," Restelli said. "The skilled aerospace workforce in the Jacksonville area, which is particularly familiar with the F/A-18 Hornet, is key to realizing that commitment."

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