



OKLAHOMA  
Commerce

OKLAHOMA  
**ACES**  
A DIVISION OF THE OKLAHOMA  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

# Annual Report

2024



Biz Jet International - Tulsa, Okla.

# Letter from the State Director of Aerospace & Defense

Oklahoma ACES (Aerospace Commerce Economic Services), established by HB 2578 in 2018, fosters partnerships to better serve Oklahoma's aviation, aerospace and defense sector. Our focus encompasses education and training, research and economic development. We dedicate our resources to promoting collaboration among businesses, manufacturers, military installations, commercial aviation, educational institutions, non-profit research institutions and state government to strengthen Oklahoma's economy.

By keeping a focus on our statewide strategy to grow Oklahoma's aerospace and defense sector, the ACES team continues to see results in our efforts to:

- Increase contracts for aviation, aerospace & defense companies in the state and the Department of Defense and its prime contractors
- Create and retain more high-wage, high-skill jobs
- Strengthen collaborations between businesses and aviation, aerospace and defense interests
- Reduce the flow of federal defense contract dollars out of state

The 2024 ACES Annual Report highlights our work toward our mission: growing Oklahoma's aerospace and defense industry by supporting existing businesses and attracting new ones. We look forward to continued collaboration, partnerships and growth in 2025.



Leshia M. Pearson

Director, Aerospace & Defense  
Oklahoma Department of Commerce  
[leshia.pearson@okcommerce.gov](mailto:leshia.pearson@okcommerce.gov)

## THE OKLAHOMA ACES STRATEGIC PLAN IS BASED ON FOUR STRATEGIC PILLARS:

**1**

Provide the infrastructure to recruit, educate and train the workforce needed to sustain and grow the aerospace industry within the state.

**2**

Create an environment to attract startups of advanced technologies that are interwoven and connected to one another.

**3**

Develop a university-led innovation cluster to support the aerospace and defense industry of the future.

**4**

Position Oklahoma to be the center of excellence for the aviation engine sustainment enterprise.

# Aerospace & Defense Economic Development Progress

Since 2018, the state has invested \$9.4 million in the ACES program. Over that time, the ACES team has secured \$2 billion in new capital investment.



## FROM THE BEGINNING

Since Nov. 1, 2018, Oklahoma ACES has helped secure



METRO AREA WINS: 68% | RURAL AREA WINS: 32%

## A RECAP OF 2024



METRO AREA WINS: 60% | RURAL AREA WINS: 40%

OKLAHOMA COMPANY EXPANSIONS: 80% | NEW TO OKLAHOMA COMPANIES: 20%

With the close of 2024, ACES had 46 open A&D projects with the potential for \$2.21 billion in capital investment and more than 6,900 new jobs with an average salary of \$84,334.



**IN THE PIPELINE**  
**\$2.21 billion**  
capital investment



**6,900+**  
new jobs



**\$84,334**  
average annual salary

# Major Aerospace & Defense News and Announcements

## ▶ PRATT & WHITNEY EXPANDS IN OKLAHOMA CITY WITH NEW \$255M FACILITY



Pratt & Whitney, an RTX business, celebrated the opening of its new 845,000-square-foot facility in Oklahoma City, solidifying its position as the company's largest military engines field location and representing a \$255 million investment.

"Oklahoma City is the heart of our global sustainment network for Pratt & Whitney's Military Engines business and plays a critical role on every single one of our programs," said Jill Albertelli, president of Military Engines at Pratt & Whitney. "This new facility will serve as a hub for all of our military engine programs and allow us to better support our customers and their missions."

Pratt & Whitney's Oklahoma City site is home to over 500 full-time employees, with an additional 500 contract and partner employees. This investment will create an additional 100 full-time jobs over the next five years.

## ▶ NEW TULSA SPACE TEST CENTER POSITIONS CITY AS A LEADER IN ROCKET ENGINE TESTING



Agile Space Industries, a leading provider in aerospace propulsion and testing solutions, announced the development of the Tulsa Space Test Center (TSTC), adjacent to the Tulsa International Airport. This state-of-the-art facility will establish Tulsa as a premier location for space engine testing and support the nation's critical need for advanced in-space propulsion testing infrastructure. As a world-

class testing hub, the TSTC will support NASA, commercial space companies and the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) by providing advanced in-space rocket engine testing capabilities.

"Space has become essential to the global economy, valued at over \$600 billion annually and projected to exceed \$1 trillion by 2040," noted Jim Bridenstine, former NASA Administrator and Managing Partner of The Artemis Group. "From banking to national security, America's infrastructure depends on space. The Tulsa Space Test Center, supported by Tulsa's robust aerospace workforce and strategic infrastructure assets, will attract further investment and growth to the region, creating high-paying jobs, boosting the local economy, and establishing a Tulsa Space Park that will drive future space innovation."

## **AAR EXPANDS OKLAHOMA CITY OPERATIONS, ADDING 200 NEW JOBS**

AAR CORP., a leading provider of aviation services to commercial and government operators, MROs, and OEMs, broke ground on the expansion of its maintenance, repair and overhaul facility in Oklahoma City.

The new facility has been designed to provide AAR an additional 80,000+ square feet of hangar and warehouse space and to accommodate all 737 variants, including the 737-10. AAR's growth in Oklahoma City supports a recently expanded maintenance

commitment from Alaska Airlines, a valued customer of AAR for more than 20 years. The new airframe MRO facility is expected to be operational in January of 2026.

"Today's groundbreaking has been made possible thanks to collaborative efforts across AAR and Alaska Airlines, partnerships with Oklahoma City Airport Trust, and state and local representatives who are passionate about expanding aviation in Oklahoma," said John M. Holmes, AAR's Chairman, President & CEO.

# Major Industry Announcements

## **ACE THERMAL SYSTEMS**

**HEADQUARTERS:** Seminole, Okla.

ACE Thermal Systems (formerly Enviro Systems Inc.) announced its continued expansion in the state with the award of the Quality Jobs contract. The company plans to create over 60 jobs in Seminole, OK, over the next five years, boosting the local economy and job opportunities.

## **BLUEHALO**

**HEADQUARTERS:** Oklahoma City, Okla.

BlueHalo expanded its footprint to Lawton's Fires Innovation Science and Technology Accelerator (FISTA) Innovation Park. The new Oklahoma presence enhances support for U.S. Army customers at Fort Sill, advancing C-UAS solutions and air defense training.

## **MST MANUFACTURING**

**HEADQUARTERS:** Claremore, Okla.

During the Farnborough International Airshow, MST announced the signing of a Long-Term Agreement with CPI Aerostructures, Inc. for the supply of components in support of CPI's aerostructures production.

## **OKLAHOMA INNOVATION EXPANSION PROGRAM (OIEP)**

**2024 PARTICIPANTS FROM THE AEROSPACE & DEFENSE SECTOR:**

Newton Design (Catoosa); PAS MRO (Bristow); Prescor Inc. (Tulsa); Radical Engines Ltd. (Guthrie); Greenwood Group Inc. (Ponca City); Delaware Resource Group (Oklahoma City); Dow Aero (Oklahoma City); Capital Aviation (Bethany)

## **BUSINESS EXPANSION INCENTIVE PROGRAM (BEIP)**

**2024 PARTICIPANTS FROM THE AEROSPACE & DEFENSE SECTOR:**

Dawn Aerospace (Burns Flat); American Airlines (Tulsa); FTI Group, LLC (Norman); LMI Finishing (Tulsa); Orizon Aerostructures (Grove); Tulsa Space Test Center (in partnership with Agile Space) (Tulsa)

# Oklahoma Aerospace & Defense on a Global Scale



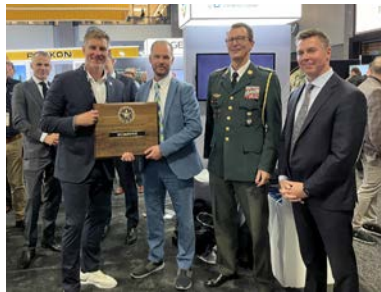
# 125%

## INCREASE IN AEROSPACE EXPORTS OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS



### Nomad Defense Expands to European Market

Oklahoma defense company Nomad Defense selected Munich, Germany-based Defense Line to manufacture its mobile security barriers throughout Europe. The partnership was facilitated by the Oklahoma Department of Commerce's efforts to empower rural companies to access the diverse markets of Asia, Europe and the Canada-Mexico trade corridor.



### MyDefence Selects Oklahoma for Second U.S. Location

Danish Counter Unmanned Air Systems (C-UAS) company, MyDefence, selected Oklahoma City for its second U.S. based office. The company is planning an initial investment of more than \$1.2 million. The expansion, which was facilitated by Commerce, will create 48 new jobs and provide military and defense companies with counter-drone technology to combat Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and other threatening drone technology.



### Oklahoma Governor Signs Aerospace, Energy MOU with Taiwan

In December 2024, Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt visited Taiwan on an energy and aerospace focused trade mission. During the missions, he met with President Lai Ching-te to discuss potential areas of collaboration between Oklahoma and Taiwan in energy, critical minerals and aerospace including Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) and drones. Gov. Stitt also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Minister of Economic Affairs Jyh-Huei Kuo between Oklahoma and Taiwan.

# Expanding Opportunities for Oklahoma Companies

The Commerce ACES Team facilitates multiple avenues to growth opportunities for existing Oklahoma aerospace and defense companies. This includes national and international trade show delegations, providing an opportunity for Oklahoma companies that may not have the budget to attend on their own to display and meet with potential customers at some of the most highly attended industry events.

Federal funds through the U.S. Small Business Administration's State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) grant support Oklahoma small businesses, increase export sales and diversify into international markets.

**DURING 2024, THE ACES TEAM ATTENDED 11 TRADE SHOWS ALLOWING THEM TO PARTNER WITH:**



**45**

**OKLAHOMA  
COMPANIES**



**5**

**OKLAHOMA  
COMMUNITIES**



**6**

**ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT  
ORGANIZATIONS**



**5**

**HIGHER  
EDUCATION  
INSTITUTIONS**

**DURING FISCAL YEAR 2023-2025\*, OKLAHOMA COMPANIES PARTICIPATED IN 13 STEP-SUPPORTED TRADE SHOWS AND BENEFITED FROM:**



**\$123.6M**

projected export sales



**1,141**

jobs created/retained



**\$21.27M**

actual export sales

*\*Reporting periods for the STEP Grant follow a two-year timeline*

# Statewide Outreach

## ➤ A HIGHLIGHT OF 2024 EVENTS THAT SUPPORT ACES STRATEGIC GOALS

### OKLAHOMA AEROSPACE FORUM

The annual Oklahoma Aerospace Forum, established in 2018, connects professionals in Oklahoma's aerospace industry. This one-day event provides a platform for networking, discussing industry trends and challenges, and learning about state support for aerospace. Attracting 200-400 attendees, including industry leaders, government representatives and educators, the forum fosters collaboration and promotes innovation. It offers insights into current and future aerospace landscapes in Oklahoma, along with access to relevant state programs and resources. The forum continues to grow, aiming to expand its reach and solidify Oklahoma's position in aerospace.

### OKLAHOMA NATIONAL GUARD'S C-UAS INITIATIVE EVENT

This exclusive government symposium and workshop addresses the growing threat of Counter-Unmanned Aerial Systems (C-UAS). Experts from academia, industry and government led discussions on current C-UAS issues, tactics and strategies, including live threat demonstrations. The event explored the evolving security landscape, focusing on UAS technology challenges like AI integration and effective countermeasures. A key component is the Oklahoma National Guard's C-UAS initiative, fostering collaboration between military personnel and civilian aerospace leaders to enhance mission readiness and develop innovative solutions for future UAS threats.

### OKLAHOMA AEROSPACE & DEFENSE CAREER FAIRS

During 2024, ACES hosted two free career fairs (Oklahoma City and Tulsa) for people in the aerospace and defense sector. These events drew more than 1,000 job seekers to meet with 42 Oklahoma aerospace and defense companies. From high school students to senior engineers, the exhibiting companies had immediate openings for every level of qualification. More than 150 individuals were hired.

**1,000** 

**JOB SEEKERS  
ATTENDED**

**42** 

**AEROSPACE & DEFENSE  
COMPANIES  
PARTICIPATED**

**150** 

**JOB SEEKERS  
HIRED**





# Promoting Oklahoma's Aerospace & Defense Sector

## DIGITAL MARKETING

Through the ACES Advocate, a regular digital newsletter, and active social media accounts, ACES delivers valuable content, including exclusive event announcements, business opportunities, program updates and relevant industry news.



### EMAIL OUTREACH

#### ACES ADVOCATE NEWSLETTER

**47%** increase in subscribers

**15%** average open rate

#### POST-TRADE SHOW LEAD NURTURE EMAIL CAMPAIGNS

**48%** average open rate

**460** new leads/contacts

### SOCIAL MEDIA



#### LINKEDIN

**18%** increase in net audience growth

**28%** increase in engagement



#### FACEBOOK

**24%** increase in net audience growth

**58%** increase in engagement

**+30%**



**TOTAL AUDIENCE INCREASE ACROSS DIGITAL MARKETING PLATFORMS**

American Airlines Tech Ops - Tulsa, Okla.



# Advancing Aerospace Together

## **OKLAHOMA BOASTS A ROBUST LEGACY IN SPACE, AVIATION, AEROSPACE AND DEFENSE.**

For more than 70 years, the state has played host to what are now the largest military and commercial aircraft maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) centers in the world: Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma City and American Airlines Technical Operations in Tulsa.

Oklahoma remains an extremely competitive and attractive state for manufacturing-heavy operations. It is from this position the state will grow the A&D industry to the number one economic engine. Existing public policy and tax laws are favorable to business, especially in the A&D industry.

Below are a few examples of how ACES partnerships and statewide collaboration helped advance the industry statewide and foster new growth opportunities in 2024.



## **Workforce**

Oklahoma remains the best state for high school aerospace education thanks to the efforts of the Oklahoma Department of Aerospace and Aeronautics (ODAA) and the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) to continually expand the AOPA's "You Can Fly" high school curriculum. For the 2024-2025 school year, 116 Oklahoma schools are participating in the program, giving Oklahoma the top spot in the country for most schools participating three years in a row.



## **Startups & Advanced Technologies**

The Lawton Fort Sill's Fires Innovation Science and Technology Accelerator (FISTA) Innovation Park continues to be a leading center for technological advancement and home to the Joint Counter small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (C-sUAS) University (JCU). FISTA acts as a collaborative hub to tackle some of today's most critical challenges. During 2024, FISTA held a groundbreaking ceremony in its new STEM lab and associated manufacturing space.

The Choctaw Nation is playing a critical role in the development of UAS technology and use. The Nation's BEYOND program received an expanded Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) use authorization from the FAA, expanding the original waiver to include an approximately 43-mile-long area. This waiver is the largest of its kind in the United States, covering a total area of over 377 sq. miles.



## Higher Education Collaboration

WindShape Inc., together with OSU and the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR), announced a new MOU establishing a partnership in the fields of UAS and AAM. This collaboration aims to leverage each entity's unique expertise to foster innovation and safety in drone integration into the U.S. National Airspace System and to enhance atmospheric research.

OU received a nearly \$4 million congressional appropriation for supply chain risk management research from the 448th Supply Chain Management Wing of the U.S. Air Force Sustainment Center. The project, coordinated by the Oklahoma Aerospace and Defense Innovation Institute and Data Institute for Societal Challenges, aims to improve the Department of Defense's supply chain capabilities by developing advanced data analytics tools.



## MRO Operations

Oklahoma is the MRO capital of the world thanks to the presence of the American Airlines Maintenance and Engineering Center (largest commercial MRO) in Tulsa and the Oklahoma City Air Logistics Complex at Tinker Air Force Base (largest air depot maintenance facility for the U.S. Department of Defense). MRO operations in Oklahoma continue to see growth. Since ACES was established in 2018, ACES/Commerce have recorded 100 business wins in the aerospace & defense sector – with more than 40% of those representing MRO operations.



**OKLAHOMA**  
**Commerce**

**[OKcommerce.gov/aces](https://okcommerce.gov/aces)**

900 N. Stiles Ave.

Oklahoma City, OK 73104

405-815-6552 | 800-588-5959