



**For Immediate Release**  
June 12, 2015

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## **Local Aerospace Company Plans Major Expansion & New Hires**

Locally headquartered Star Aviation announced it will expand its facility at Mobile Aeroplex at Brookley and hire between 20 and 50 additional employees over the next two years to keep up with its growing workload.



“This growth is outside of Airbus,” says Johnny Wacker, Star Aviation’s executive director and a company partner, who announced the company’s manufacturing division expects to break ground in the next few weeks on a new 24,000-square-foot facility, adjacent to the company’s principal office. The estimated completion date is year-end 2015. Currently, the company has 18,000 square feet, but double digit growth over the last five years is being driven by the data explosion. He adds, the company will look at retaining all or part of the existing building at 2150 Michigan Ave., based on the company’s anticipated work.

“We have been able to weather the storms when there was an industry downturn, and have worked to position ourselves to be ready for the resurgence, which we are now experiencing. We are pleased with the growth in Mobile, specifically in the aviation industry. As a local-born company, we are proud that we are able to be part of this evolution, and able expand our business and job offerings,” says Wacker.

“Star Aviation is a great example of local existing industry growth in the aerospace sector. With their capabilities, ingenuity, commitment and history in our region, Star serves as a shining example of Mobile’s long standing success in aviation,” says Troy Wayman, the Mobile Area Chamber’s vice president of economic development.

The 16-year-old, privately held company specializes in aircraft engineering, certification, manufacturing and technical services, primarily supporting commercial passenger aircraft modifications that consist of components needed for aftermarket systems and equipment. A current example is on-board Internet connectivity.

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“Over the years we have built a solid manufacturing foundation within the aviation industry, and the expansion will allow us the opportunity to further capitalize on the strong industrial resources and skilled workforce in the Mobile area. These are exciting times in Mobile for aviation, and this expansion will give Star the needed bandwidth to accommodate existing customer growing demands as well as attract new customers worldwide,” says Gordon Smart, vice president of business development at Star.

The facility will have a more efficient design for manufacturing and room for several new pieces of equipment. Wacker says the most significant is a CNC (Computer Numerical Controlled) 3-axis milling machine, capable of making a single component as large as 6.5 feet x 13.5 feet from a single piece of stock and programmed to a 3-D computer model. Once the parts are built and engineering is complete, the clients’ manufacturing, repair and overhaul vendor will do the actual installation.

“In addition to the new facility, Star Aviation is expanding our machining capabilities this year by adding one of the largest travel bridge mills on the Gulf Coast, with production to begin this summer. We already have immediate orders for large aircraft antenna adapter plates, which are to be delivered this year. We are bidding additional work for numerous customers including Airbus and The Boeing Co. Once production begins, we'll be adding machinists and fabricators to our staff, and expanding our quality assurance department to bring in-house capabilities that we are currently outsourcing out-of-state," says Jeff Osborn, Star’s vice president of manufacturing.

Currently, the company employs 130 people with 85 in Mobile and 45 in Seattle.

#### About Star Aviation

Founded in 1999, Star Aviation is an aircraft engineering, certification, manufacturing and technical services firm headquartered in Mobile, Ala. Star Aviation is an industry leader specializing in the post-delivery, or aftermarket, modifications of commercial aircraft. This includes avionics upgrades, structural and electrical design, in-flight Entertainment systems, wireless cabin distribution systems, high-speed data system installation and live television, satellite interfaces, custom equipment racks and interior reconfigurations. For these modifications Star provides engineering services and manufacturing of supporting parts such as wire harness assemblies, machined components and structural assemblies. For more information about Star Aviation, visit [www.staraviation.com](http://www.staraviation.com).

#### About the Mobile Area Chamber’s Economic Development Efforts

The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce is a private business organization with more than 2,100 members. The Chamber is the economic developer of record for the city of Mobile and Mobile County. Over the last decade, Mobile’s economic development efforts have garnered \$8.49 billion in capital investment and added 15,361 jobs with an average salary of \$55,959, including 37 new businesses recruited and 69 expansions made at existing area companies.

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