



Photo Courtesy of Pratt & Whitney

AEROSPACE FLIES HIGH IN NORTH CAROLINA

From the Wright Brothers' first flight at Kitty Hawk to today's cutting-edge research, North Carolina continues its legacy as an aerospace leader. Dozens of top aerospace manufacturers have major operations in North Carolina, including pioneers such as GE Aviation, Honda Aircraft Company, HAECO, Cyril Bath, Raytheon Technologies, and Spirit AeroSystems. And hundreds more businesses make up North Carolina's aerospace supply chain, including engineering, composite, textile, and MRO companies. It's no wonder PwC ranks our state fifth in the nation for aerospace manufacturing attractiveness. Here's a look at one of the latest global aerospace players to land in North Carolina.

PRATT & WHITNEY CHOOSES NORTH CAROLINA FOR CUTTING-EDGE PLANT

When jet-engine maker Pratt & Whitney was looking for the best place to build a state-of-the-art advanced manufacturing plant to support its next-generation engines, a reliable and talented workforce pipeline was a top priority.

After all, this 1.2 million-square-foot, 800-job plant would be producing high-pressure turbine airfoils (blades) for Pratt & Whitney's revolutionary geared turbofan engines, engineered for high fuel efficiency and low noise.

"This investment will enable Pratt & Whitney to continue to modernize and transform its operations with cutting-edge technologies," company President Chris Calio said when announcing that the \$650-million plant would be built in Asheville, North Carolina.



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At the outset, the Asheville region already offered a strong manufacturing workforce to Pratt & Whitney, a division of Fortune 50 Raytheon Technologies. The city is already home to a GE Aviation advanced-manufacturing facility. And Pratt & Whitney will be able to draw workers from an 11-county laborshed.

But on top of that, five regional community colleges in Western North Carolina – led by Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College (A-B Tech) – came together to offer classes specific to Pratt & Whitney's needs.

In addition, A-B Tech is partnering with Pratt & Whitney to recruit qualified candidates and provide pre- and post-hire training. With Buncombe County support, the college will also build and operate a 20,000-square-foot educational facility close to the Pratt & Whitney plant, with space dedicated to training Pratt & Whitney machinists and other workers.

The new plant in North Carolina will include an advanced casting foundry as well as onsite airfoil machining, coating and finishing operations. Production is anticipated to begin in the last half of 2022, with 800 hired through 2027.

In addition to the reassurance of a strong workforce pipeline, Pratt & Whitney's site search priorities included being in an aerospace-centered region offering a quality of life that would attract workers and finding a site that could accommodate a 1-million-square-foot building.

Pratt & Whitney found the right location in 100 acres located between the scenic Blue Ridge Parkway, Interstate 26 and the French Broad River. The site lies within the new Biltmore Park West, a 1,000-acre master-planned development by Biltmore Farms LLC. Biltmore Farms gifted the 100 acres to Pratt & Whitney, but site access was an issue.

The Golden LEAF Foundation, a nonprofit that works to build economic opportunity across North Carolina, stepped up to provide \$12 million to the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce Community Betterment Foundation – to help fund construction of a five-lane bridge across the French Broad River to reach the site.

In addition, the state awarded the company a performance-based Job Development Investment Grant of up to \$15.54 million over 12 years. The county also approved economic incentives totaling \$27 million over 10 years.

All in all, local and state governments are calling the Pratt & Whitney project a story of how public and private partnership as well as regional collaboration secured one of the largest announced project wins ever in Western North Carolina.

Aerospace innovators such as Pratt & Whitney choose North Carolina for its winning combination of location, world-class workforce and training, existing industry strength, and business-friendly environment. **To explore locating your aerospace manufacturing or supply business in North Carolina, contact the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina at 919.447.7777 or [visit edpnc.com](http://visit.edpnc.com).**