

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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\$32.5M "Project Maple" at Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport to Spark Economic Growth, Diversification

Premier Aviation to open location here, creating 250 high-wage jobs

Panama City, FL (September 13, 2023) — In a boon for regional economic development, an international aviation maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) company will soon break ground at Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport (ECP), bringing more than \$32.5 million of capital investment and creating 250 high-wage jobs in the next four years.

Premier Aviation USA Overhaul Services (Premier Aviation), which is headquartered in Quebec City, Canada will open its second location in Bay County, Florida. The project, dubbed "Project Maple" in a nod to the company's Canadian roots, is the result of two years of efforts by ECP and Bay Economic Development Alliance to expand the region's aviation sector.

"Family is our most important core value, and we are overjoyed to be expanding in Bay County and creating new opportunities for people to prosper in their hometown," said Sylvain Perron, president of Premier Aviation. "We look forward to being part of this community and are eager to break ground and establish ourselves as the region's leader in aircraft maintenance."

"This project could have gone anywhere in the United States and Premier Aviation chose Bay County," said Holly Melzer, chair of the Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport Board of Directors. "With major customers in the Southeast, the company recognized that our centralized location would be an advantage, as is our proven capacity to train talent in the aircraft maintenance sector."

"This is a milestone moment along our journey to further diversify our community's employment base, particularly with high-wage, high-skill jobs," said Patrick Jones, chair of the Bay EDA Executive Committee. "Premier Aviation will be an excellent asset to the region and will complement the accelerated growth at our airport."

To prepare new hires, Haney Technical College will facilitate tailored courses in aviation maintenance. Haney currently trains students in both aviation airframe mechanics and aviation powerplant mechanics. The 40 to 50 aviation mechanics trained each year have had to leave the community to find work without maintenance, repair and operations services, but that won't be the case much longer.

Premier Aviation plans for the Bay County operation to become “the center of excellence” on Embraer and ATR products: the ERJ 145, EMB 175/190 and the ATR42/72 series aircraft, which range in passenger capacity from 40 to 106 seats. The company estimates it will hire 10 employees in 2024 and 80 in each subsequent year through 2026. Wages are anticipated to be over 115% of the Bay County average. Overall, approximately \$13.75 million of private payroll will be added to the region annually. Premier Aviation plans to work closely with CareerSource Gulf Coast on their hiring and recruiting plans.

Construction has not yet begun on the two-bay, narrow body hangar but is expected to ramp up quickly, with completion by summer 2025. Half of the funds will come through Triumph Gulf Coast, a nonprofit that oversees expenditure of economic damage funds from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. The other half will come from Space Florida and Premier Aviation through a conduit financing structure. Space Florida will own the facility and long-term lease the facility to Premier Aviation.

This major investment from an aviation MRO is a step toward the establishment of the Aviation Center of Excellence at ECP, with a goal to provide a ready pipeline of workforce for future maintenance, repair and operations services. As one of the newest international airports in the United States with 3,000 developable acres, global air traffic network, and development-ready sites adjacent to a 10,000-foot runway, the airport is well positioned to attain its goal.

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About Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport

Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport (ECP) is located less than 30 minutes from Panama City Beach, Panama City, and the beaches of South Walton. Today, with service from American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, Southwest Airlines, and United Airlines, ECP’s airline partners provide daily flights to worldwide destinations, including year-round and seasonal nonstop flights between ECP and Atlanta (ATL), Austin (AUS) Baltimore (BWI), Charlotte (CLT), Chicago (MDW/ORD), Dallas (DAL/DFW), Denver (DEN), Houston (HOU/IAH), Indianapolis (IND), Kansas City (MCI), Nashville (BNA), St. Louis (STL), Washington DC (DCA), and more. ECP provides Northwest Florida with first-class facilities and was strategically developed for major economic development opportunities. ECP is the gateway to visitors seeking Northwest Florida’s famous beaches.

About Bay Economic Development Alliance

The Bay County Economic Development Alliance (BayEDA) is Bay County’s economic development entity. Publicly and privately funded, BayEDA serves Bay County in the mission of supporting the existing businesses in Bay

County and in the recruitment of new business to Bay County. BayEDA supports the existing pillars of the economy and is dedicated to growing and diversifying the Bay County economy.

About Premier Aviation

Premier Aviation is a leading full-service provider of airframe maintenance with all back shops under one roof. Headquartered in Canada at the Quebec City International Airport (YQB), Premier Aviation is Transport Canada, FAA, EASA and ANAC certified/approved. Premier Aviation provides world-class cost-effectiveness and value-added MRO services to aircraft operators and lessors by maintaining all regional aircraft types, such as, but not limited to: ATR, DeHavilland, Embraer and MHI RJ (Mitsubishi).