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Georgia Department of Economic Development

75 Fifth Street, NW, Suite 1200

Atlanta, Georgia 30308 USA

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Aerospace



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The aerospace industry thrives on innovative ideas, state-of-the-art technology and the collaboration of explorative minds. Success in such a progressive field depends on access to these resources to transform dreams into reality. Many aerospace companies speed their economic prosperity by capitalizing on the tools and assets Georgia has to offer.

Aerospace product and parts manufacturing currently employs 18,751 workers, according to the 2006 figures from the Georgia Department of Labor. Since this figure does not take into account related aerospace research and development or businesses that provide critical products and services to the industry, it is likely that more than 25,000 people contribute to Georgia's thriving aerospace industry.

With Georgia's strong investment in the industry, a number of aerospace giants have located here, including Delta Air Lines, Lockheed Martin, Boeing, and Northrop Grumman, among the state's nearly 200 aerospace companies. In addition, Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation, a wholly owned subsidiary of General Dynamics and a global leader in the design and production of business and special mission jet aircraft, is headquartered in Savannah, GA.





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According to U.S. Census Bureau trade statistics, Georgia exported more than \$1.45 billion in aircraft and aircraft-related parts to the world in 2006, with exports to Germany, Switzerland and other European nations showing double and triple digit percentage increases over 2005 dollar volume.

A leader in aerospace intellectual capital, Georgia presents unique opportunities to accelerate research and development, establish effective best practices and access vast intellectual capital. One avenue is the Aerospace Innovation Center (AIC) in Warner Robins, GA. Founded in 2003 to develop cutting-edge technologies and stay ahead of the competition, AIC members can work with some of the world's best and brightest minds through its partnerships with the University System of Georgia, private institutions and companies, and the Warner Robins Air Logistics Center. New research initiatives and start-up enterprises are also supported through the center's incubator program, and more-established companies

are prospering through innovative programs created to meet their evolving needs.

The state's research institutions also provide opportunities for Georgia aerospace companies to stay ahead of global competition. For example, the Georgia Institute of Technology's Daniel Guggenheim School of Aerospace Engineering was ranked the #2 aerospace engineering program in the nation in the 2007 edition of *America's Best Colleges* by *U.S. News and World Report*.

In 2001, Georgia Tech's Research Institute was awarded \$60 million by the Semiconductor Industry Association and the federal government to continue work on research projects that could eventually translate into superior weaponry. Researchers there are working on sensor systems to monitor cargo containers, intelligence visualization systems to help determine the position of hostile troops, and standardization systems to evaluate military efficiency



and structure timelines for equipment updates. Cuts in defense spending in the late 1980s and early 1990s compelled manufacturers to turn military capacity toward civilian production. For example, global positioning systems have been widely adapted for civilian use in navigation and agricultural equipment, some shipyards building naval vessels turned to producing pleasure boats, and some airplane manufacturers producing military planes



switched to making corporate jets. But while industry orientation has shifted, Georgia's expertise and skilled labor has remained intact. Home to 13 military bases with more than 150,000 total personnel, Georgia has drawn defense contractors back to the region. ■