

# AEROSPACE/ AVIATION

## *Take Off in Mississippi*

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Not many people know that every commercial plane and jetliner in the world has at least one hydraulic component that was designed and manufactured in Mississippi. But, in fact, this is just one part of the aerospace/aviation industry's long history of success in Mississippi. Today some of the leading names in the industry – NASA, United Technologies, EADS North America, Rolls-Royce, Raytheon, Lockheed Martin, L-3 Communications, Vertex Aerospace, Northrop Grumman and GE Aviation – are continuing to make history in Mississippi.

### **An Industry Overview**

The Gulf Coast region of the state has one of the greatest concentrations of avionics and aircraft maintenance personnel in the United States when compared to all mid-size metropolitan markets. Many of these employees are at the NASA Stennis Space Center, the premier rocket engine testing facility for NASA space vehicles. In addition, three of the most powerful supercomputers in the world are located in the facility.

While the Stennis Space Center features a large concentration of aerospace companies, others can be found throughout the state. American Eurocopter has a manufacturing and assembly plant in East Central Mississippi, while ATK Alliant Tech System supplies the commercial aerospace industry from a facility in the Northeast region of the state.

**Fast Facts:** Stennis Space Center in Hancock County, Mississippi, is America's largest rocket and engine test complex and its high performance computing capability ranks 10th worldwide. All future NASA missions to the moon, Mars and beyond will start in Hancock County, MS at the new test stand at NASA.

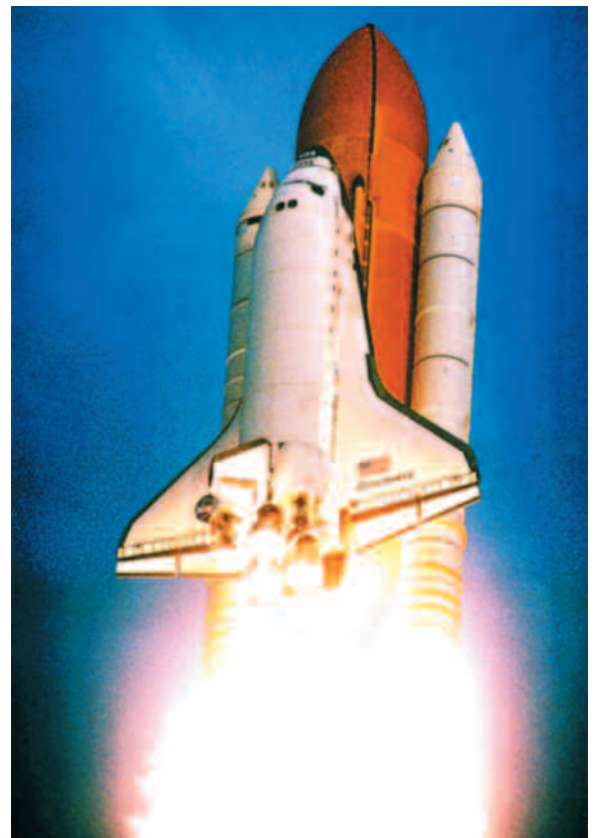
### **A Trained Workforce**

A well-educated and trained workforce is an essential element to operating a successful aerospace facility. The state of Mississippi offers a multitude of resources to ensure that our workforce is prepared to meet the needs of your business.

At the announcement of GE Aviation's newest facility, President & CEO David Calhoun commented that the facility would involve "the most sophisticated manufacturing that GE does." And Mississippi's workforce is ready for the challenge.

Mississippi State University (MSU) in Starkville is home to a **National Science Foundation Engineering Research Center** and offers undergraduate, masters and doctoral degrees in aerospace engineering. The **Raspert Flight Laboratory**, which is part of the **Aerospace Engineering School** at MSU, specializes in the design and testing of materials to support rapid prototyping for lighter weight aircraft.

The University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg is a national leader in the area of polymer science, with one of the top programs in the United States. The premier **Polymer Research Institute** also includes one of the most advanced rapid prototyping systems in the world. In addition, James D. Byrd, a Mississippi native, is a polymer scientist who developed the plastic used as heat shields by NASA.



The **Center for Manufacturing Technology Excellence** also provides training to companies located in Mississippi. That training option, combined with training available through the state's community/junior college system, offers aerospace/aviation companies a variety of options for adequately providing its workers with the technical skills needed for success.

A strong educational system, combined with a growing pool of workers already trained in aerospace and aviation operations, ensures that your company will find a highly skilled workforce available to meet your needs.

## A Supportive Business Climate

Mississippi offers a strong, supportive business climate, where the cost of doing business is low and many other tools are available to help your business compete in today's economy. Locations within Mississippi can offer companies substantial savings compared with many other parts of the U.S.

Economic incentive programs provide income tax credits for job creation, investment, retraining of employees and research and development activities. The **Mississippi Advantage Jobs Incentive Program** provides quarterly incentive payments based on a percentage of withholding to qualifying companies for up to 10 years, which provides an important cash benefit to new companies locating in the state. Cities and counties may also offer a property tax exemption for qualifying projects.

The **Tort Reform Act of 2004** is another important element of the business climate in Mississippi. This act ensures fairness in the courtroom for Mississippi businesses, with provisions that address joinder and venue; innocent seller protection; and non-economic damages caps.

Mississippi businesses also receive important support from government leaders from the local, state and federal levels. The state's strong congressional delegation holds leadership positions on a number of key committees, including the Appropriations Committee, the Homeland Security Committee, the Energy and Commerce Committee, and the Armed Services Committee.

Companies seeking new sites will find an abundance of land available near airports throughout the state. Many of these sites are controlled by local governments or economic development entities, which often expedites real estate negotiations. These sites, combined with reliable utilities and one-stop environmental permitting, make Mississippi an ideal location for the aerospace and aviation industry.

## An Accessible Location

The ability to move raw materials in and finished product out to market is essential to successful aerospace companies. Prime



Mississippi locations offer air, highway and rail access, in addition to key ports along the Gulf Coast and the state's navigable rivers.

Mississippi's highway system ranks among the four best in the country and the best in the southern United States. Interstate 55, which runs north and south, provides access to major markets like Chicago, Memphis, New Orleans and St. Louis, while Interstates 10 and 20, running east and west, provide access to Atlanta, Birmingham, Dallas and Los Angeles.

Mississippi's location, which is central to both U.S. coasts, is within a day's drive of more than 50 percent of the U.S. business population, including such major markets as Atlanta, Birmingham, Dallas, Houston, Little Rock, Memphis, Mobile, Nashville, New Orleans and St. Louis. Seventeen rail systems serve Mississippi with more than 2,800 miles of track, and the state's 15 ports include two on the Gulf Coast with deep water access to worldwide commerce.

Mississippi also is home to 80 airports, including Jackson-Evers International Airport, the state's busiest. Three other major commercial airports can be found in or near the state, including the Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport, the Memphis International Airport and the New Orleans International Airport.

**To help your business take off in Mississippi, call the Mississippi Development Authority at 1.800.360.3323 or visit our website at [www.mississippi.org](http://www.mississippi.org).**