

HIGH TECH INFRASTRUCTURE

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Executive Summary

Study Area: Macon and Warner Robins

Georgia has been able to attract varied types of aerospace and defense industry firms because of an available and well-trained labor force, ample support facilities, and an excellent quality of life.

Georgia is location to 100 or more companies producing aerospace products or supplier services. Well over 50 companies are engaged in defense or aerospace related manufacturing with an estimated employment of 25,000. In addition, some of these companies are also engaged in research & development, design, engineering, and software development. Locally in Warner Robins, over 150 aerospace companies are listed with the Chamber of Commerce and several others, which are not accounted for, that are not members.

With high-tech industries booming in every region across the state, ongoing efforts are made for a cooperative approach between the public and private sectors to continue to compete and succeed in developing, maintaining, and attracting high-tech industry. Middle Georgia offers a wide range of advanced communication services, including high-speed internet services, data transport, domain registration, web hosting, and video solution, all delivered over a state-of-the-art fiber-optic-based broadband network. In addition, Asynchronous transfer mode (ATM), Digital subscriber line (DSL) - at various speeds, Frame relay, SONET rings, Self-healing fiber rings, and T1's are available.

(Sources: Excerpts from Aerospace Industry Overview, prepared by the Georgia Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism, March 2003; Warner Robins Chamber of Commerce, February 2004; www.onlineathens.com/stories/110399/opi_1103990039.shtml; BellSouth, ALLTEL and Cox Communications)

Aerospace at the Cutting-Edge in Middle Georgia

Middle Georgia has long been recognized as a leading force in the nation's aerospace industry. Specifically, the region excels in the area of aircraft lifecycle support, which extends the lives of both commercial and military airplanes in the safest and most economical ways possible.

In keeping with the state's high-tech economic development strategy of creating Centers of Innovation where existing infrastructure and expertise already exist, the Governor announced the creation of the Middle Georgia Aerospace Innovation Center (MAIC). The MAIC – a partnership between the Georgia Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism's (GDITT) Office of Science and Technology, the University System of Georgia, private institutions and companies, and the Warner Robins Air Logistics Center (WR-ALC) – is working to develop innovative new technologies to transform and modernize lifecycle support for aircraft.

As home to Boeing, Gulfstream, Lockheed-Martin, Northrop Grumman, and the WR-ALC, the Middle Georgia region has established infrastructure and expertise in aviation-related manufacture, repair and overhaul operations (MRO). Linking organizations such as these to the airline industry at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport and the academic expertise of the Georgia Institute of Technology, Macon State College and Mercer University lays a solid foundation for the production of new approaches to aircraft life cycle support and continued economic growth in the region.

Specifically, researchers from Georgia Tech, Macon State, and Mercer are working to create technology that drive a lean sustainment model for aircraft – streamlining the process, reducing waste and balancing value to cost. Technology created in the MAIC will then be tested by the WR-ALC and private companies, including Boeing and Lockheed-Martin, which will refine the new technologies and prepare them for commercial application. The center will offer membership to other aerospace companies from across the country and around the world, giving them the opportunity to take advantage of the intellectual capital being developed there.

Georgia's Centers of Innovation strategy is led by GDITT's Office of Science and Technology and focuses on boosting high-tech economic development opportunities across the state. It promotes the state's entrepreneurial technology economy by supporting the growth of existing technology companies and attracting new ones; fostering the commercialization of groundbreaking Georgia-based research; and building awareness of the state as a technology destination.

(Source: Georgia Technology Exchange, a publication of Georgia Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism, "Aerospace at the Cutting-Edge in Middle Georgia", January/February 2004)

Recruiting More High-Tech Companies

One of Germany's top economic leaders visited Macon in 2002 as part of a state program that helps second-tier cities recruit more high-tech companies. The manager of economic development in Heilbronn, Germany, met with economic developers here in Middle Georgia. The visit included tours of local companies and a workshop during which representatives of the two cities shared information and recruitment strategies for high-tech firms.

The visit in Macon was sponsored by the CyberGeorgia Program, a joint effort between the Georgia Department of Industry, Trade & Tourism and Georgia Tech. The project aims to help all of Georgia be as effective at recruiting technology as Atlanta.

Macon is one of four cities included in the CyberGeorgia project. The others are Columbus, Augusta, and Savannah. As part of the program, CyberGeorgia matches participating cities with European communities that share similarities such as population size and economic base. In addition to Germany, other participating countries are France, Italy, and Ireland. Heilbronn dovetails with Macon because it is an automotive and aerospace center. The Middle Georgia area already boasts several aerospace firms, and Macon economic leaders have targeted that industry for future growth.

(Source: "German development official plans Macon visit", The Macon Telegraph, by Cindy Sams, March 2002)

THE DETAILS.....WARNER ROBINS AND HOUSTON COUNTY

Houston County is strategically located in the center of the State of Georgia along Interstate 75. With a motivated workforce, nationally ranked public schools, reasonably priced industrial sites, and a comfortable quality of life, Houston County can offer every size business the resources needed to grow and succeed.

HIGH-TECH INFRASTRUCTURE	With support from BellSouth, ALLTEL, Cox Communications, and others, state-of-the art communication services can be available to Warner Robins, Houston County, and the surrounding Middle Georgia area. Through a digital switched and fiber optic-based infrastructure, industries can be provided with Asynchronous Transfer Mode (ATM), Frame Relay, SONET rings, Broadband services (DSL, T-1, DS-3, OC-48) and wireless services. Local networks and long distance networks are mostly fiber fed.
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(Sources: <http://www.houstoncountyga.net/home.htm>; BellSouth, ALLTEL and Cox Communications)

THE DETAILS.....MACON

Macon has a diversified economy that can support a wide variety of industry sectors. The labor force, education and training support, communication and transportation networks, location, and quality of life attract and sustain all types of companies.

HIGH-TECH INFRASTRUCTURE	BellSouth, Cox Communications, and others supply state of the art communication services to Macon, including Central Office services, digital switching, DSL, cable modem, fiber optic, T-1, OC-3 and larger. There are multiple Points of Presence in Macon.
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(Sources: www.maconchamber.com/MEDC/Infrastructure.htm; www.maconworks.com/industrial-sites; www.maconworks.com/target-industries)

