



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Monday, December 13, 2021

Governor Lee, Commissioner Rolfe Announce West Star Aviation to Expand Operations in Chattanooga

- *Full-service aircraft maintenance, repair and overhaul company to invest \$17 million in facility expansion*
- *Project represents the creation of 100 new jobs in Hamilton County*

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee, Department of Economic and Community Development Commissioner Bob Rolfe and West Star Aviation officials announced today the company will invest \$17 million to expand its existing operations at the Chattanooga Metropolitan Airport (KCHA).

West Star, a full-service aircraft maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) company, will create 100 new jobs through the expansion, which comes six years after the company established its Chattanooga operations.

West Star will retrofit one of its existing hangars to include a new design studio and will oversee the construction of a new 40,000-square-foot hangar with an additional 17,000 square feet of flooring to accommodate West Star's shop and support base for its growing client pool.

Founded in 1947, West Star offers avionics installation, certification and repair for all major manufacturers, used and surplus avionics sales and exchanges, parts and accessory overhaul repair, custom paint, interior design, major modification and refurbishment. Since acquiring its Chattanooga operations in 2015, West Star has expanded its employment at the Chattanooga Metropolitan Airport (KCHA) to more than 250 people.

In the last five years, TNECD has supported more than 30 economic development projects in Hamilton County resulting in nearly 5,500 job commitments and approximately \$1.7 billion in capital investment.

QUOTES

"West Star's expansion and investment in Tennessee strengthens our state's position in the aerospace industry. These 100 new jobs will provide additional opportunities to our highly-skilled workforce, and I thank West Star for its continued commitment to Hamilton County." –

Gov. Bill Lee

"We appreciate West Star for its \$17 million investment and for contributing to Chattanooga's business landscape. This project would not be possible without strong leadership and partnership at the local level, and we would like to thank Hamilton County Mayor Jim Coppinger, Chattanooga Mayor Tim Kelly and Chattanooga Airport Authority for being key drivers in making this win possible for Hamilton County." – **TNECD Commissioner Bob Rolfe**

"The local community and development programs have been a key part to aiding in the growth of West Star in the Chattanooga area. We are excited about the opportunity to continue to grow and add to the local workforce while expanding our facilities. We look forward to the long-term partnership with TNECD and appreciate the support of the aerospace industry in Tennessee." – **Jim Rankin, CEO, West Star Aviation**

"We have seen enormous growth in the small amount of time we have been a part of the community and are thrilled with the announcement of our expansion to add even more jobs to the area. Chattanooga has provided West Star with tremendous support through the development programs, allowing for the continued growth in the area." – **Steve Goede, general manager, West Star Aviation**

"TVA and EPB congratulate West Star on its decision to expand operations and create new job opportunities in Chattanooga. It's always an exciting day when we can celebrate a company's commitment to continued growth in the Valley. We are pleased to partner with the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development to help support companies, like West Star Aviation's continued success in the region and celebrate this announcement together." – **John Bradley, TVA senior vice president of Economic Development**

"Congratulations to West Star Aviation on this expansion. This company plays an important role in the transportation industry in Chattanooga, and I am glad they have been successful here and are able to create new jobs for Chattanoogaans. I am proud to support a business-friendly environment in Tennessee with low-taxes and less regulation that helps businesses like West Star Aviation thrive. I look forward to their continued growth and success." – **Sen. Bo Watson (R-Hixson)**

"With a multi-talented workforce, business-friendly environment and central location, Hamilton County is the ideal setting for companies to expand. West Star Aviation has been a great community partner and I look forward to working with them in the future to bring more jobs to the Chattanooga area." – **Rep. Greg Vital (R-Harrison)**

About the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development

The Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development's mission is to develop strategies that help make Tennessee the No. 1 location in the Southeast for high quality jobs. To grow and strengthen Tennessee, the department seeks to attract new corporate investment to the state and works with Tennessee companies to facilitate expansion and economic growth.

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