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**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*

**Chattanooga, Tenn. (December 13, 2021)** – 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 (CHA) to more than 200 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**

“Hamilton County’s continuing goal is to strengthen business retention, expansion, and recruitment initiatives, West Star’s 17 million dollar expansion proves we’re on the right track,” says Hamilton County Mayor Jim Coppinger. “We are delighted with these additional 100 jobs that this expansion will bring to our community.” – **Hamilton County Mayor Jim Coppinger.**

“West Star Aviation's expansion is a sign of our Airport's critical role as an anchor for Chattanooga's continued prosperity," said Mayor Tim Kelly. "In addition to our thriving freight and logistics industry, the Scenic City is becoming a hub for corporate and leisure travel. Companies like West Star are rising to meet this exciting and essential moment for the greater-Chattanooga region." – **Chattanooga Mayor Tim Kelly**

“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**

“West Star has been a great partner, and their choice to expand in Chattanooga is a significant investment in our airport and our community,” said Terry Hart, president and CEO of the Chattanooga Airport. “The Chattanooga Airport is an economic driver, and this expansion will bring in even more companies and added jobs, leading to additional spending in our region.” – **Terry Hart, president and CEO of the Chattanooga Airport**

“West Star's expansion supports our initiative to empower our economy with high paying jobs. We congratulate them on their continued success.” – **Chattanooga City Councilman Isaiah Hester, District 5**

“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**

“West Star Aviation's commitment to our community is confirmation of the company's ability to recruit great talent to our region,” says Charles Wood. This expansion represents the continued diversification to our regional economy. “ - **Charles Wood, Vice President of Economic Development for the Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce.**

"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)**

Since 2015, the Chattanooga chamber has assisted with new business locations and expansions totaling over \$2.3 billion in investments and over 7,500 jobs.

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