



## **U.K. company would bring 240 jobs, \$50M facility to PTI. Company is asking for \$308,879 and \$124,000 grant.**

Richard Craver – April 7, 2023

Piedmont Triad International Airport is in contention for a 240-job, \$50 million maintenance facility by U.K. aerospace manufacturer Marshall Aerospace USA LLC, according to a legal notice posted Friday by the Guilford County Board of Commissioners.

The commissioners will hold a public hearing on an economic-incentive package at 5:30 p.m. April 20 in their meeting room at 301 W. Market St. in Greensboro.

The commissioners would offer up to \$308,879 in incentives, plus a \$124,000 local matching fund utility grant.

In exchange, Marshall would pledge to create 240 full-time jobs.

The legal notice indicates the Greensboro City Council is likely to offer an incentive package.

A state Commerce Department incentive package also is likely from the Job Development Grant program given the legal notice says Marshall is considering other U.S. sites.

According to the legal notice, “the local approval of incentives does not commit the company to locate in North Carolina.”

However, the vast majority of companies tend to commit to a local project — often within days or weeks — of being approved for local and state incentives.

Marshall could be immediately reached for comment on the project. PTI executive director Kevin Baker said Friday he cannot comment on any specific project or projects, per Piedmont Triad Airport Authority policies.

“I can say that we continue to prepare the airport to compete for all types of aerospace projects, and we actively pursue potential companies worldwide to be important employers at the airport and for our community,” Baker said.

## **Marshall background**

According to its website, Marshall Aerospace has operations in the U.K., Europe, Middle East, Canada and U.S. Its primary customers are Air Forces across the globe.

The primary focus of the Marshall Aerospace business “is the delivery of routine maintenance, modifications and repairs to the iconic Hercules C-130 transport aircraft” that has been in service in some fashion since the early 1970s.

“The team has a hard-earned reputation as a global authority on the C-130 platform, boasting unrivaled engineering experience and expertise that makes it hard to beat,” according to the company.

“Marshall Aerospace continues to cement its market-leading position, winning new customers and helping to keep their fleets relevant and ready for service.”

Marshall also operates Aerostructures, which specializes in the design and manufacture of auxiliary fuel systems and tanks that are used to extend multi-mission maritime aircraft flight range.

“We are incredibly proud of the work that we do to keep our customer aircraft mission ready enabling them to protect people in critical situations,” according to a website statement from Neil McManus, the company’s managing director.

The company recently opened an Aerostructures plant in the U.K.

The facility houses production of auxiliary fuels tanks for the P-8 maritime patrol aircraft, a military derivative of Boeing’s civilian next-generation 737-800.

## **PTI presence**

PTI remains the state’s third largest airport overall and third for commercial service, at \$9.3 billion in economic impact in 2021, according to an N.C. Aviation Division report released in January. That is up 7.6% from the 2019 report.

However, PTI was overshadowed by the \$31.77 billion impact at Charlotte-Douglas International Airport and \$17 billion at Raleigh-Durham International Airport.

Included in that category for PTI would be the FedEx cargo-sorting hub, the HAECO maintenance facilities, the HondaJet manufacturing operations, and other companies with operations on its campus.

HAECO Americas had as of March 2021 nearly 3,000 of the state's 4,583 maintenance and repair workers. North Carolina ranks fifth in the nation in aerospace maintenance and repair employment HAECO also has operations in High Point and Wallburg.

The Federal Aviation Administration defines general aviation as including all segments of the aviation industry except commercial air carriers and military.

That can include: production and sale of general aviation aircraft, avionics and other equipment; support services, such as maintenance and repair, flight schools, such as training of new pilots and pilots interested in additional ratings or certification; sightseeing; movement of large heavy loads by helicopter; flying for personal or business/corporate reasons; and emergency medical services.

The 2021 report determined there were 21,450 jobs connected directly or indirectly to PTI, down from 30,015 in the 2019 report.

Baker said in January that the latest count is about 8,600 jobs directly connected to PTI.

That number is expected to increase by at least 1,761 by the end of the decade from Boom Supersonic's planned \$500 million superfactory.

## **What it could mean**

It's not surprising that Marshall is considering PTI for the maintenance facility given the burgeoning aerotropolis and advanced manufacturing already in the Triad, said John H. Boyd, a global site-selection expert with The Boyd Co. of Boca Raton, Fla.

"Even more so than pharma and biotech, the aerospace industry — given its very demanding, precision skill sets in manufacturing and engineering — tends to cluster when making location decisions," Boyd said.

"Boom's recent groundbreaking at Piedmont Triad International Airport is already having downstream benefits in the form of UK-based Marshall Aerospace shortlisting the airport site for a new aircraft maintenance facility."

Boyd said he is familiar with Marshall through his firm's site-selection work with Boeing.

"Marshall is a top-notch, privately held player in aerospace field," Boyd said.

"The incentive package being offered by the state and local authorities is on point in a sector that will continue to expand in the Triad region.

"The aerospace industry is coming back very strong from the pandemic lull and is on an impressive trajectory. Boom is a terrific win for Greensboro but it is only part of the story here."

Having HondaJet and HAECO as current tenants, and Boom Supersonic on its way, “it is not surprising that PTI has begun to attract wide interest from a number of suitors,” said Keith Debbage, a joint professor of Geography & Sustainable Tourism and Hospitality at UNC Greensboro.

“The patient acquisition of land near the airport suitable for new aviation and aerospace firms has also certainly helped our case.

“It is the result of a lot of careful planning and visioning by the major leaders of our region. Long may it continue,” Debbage said.