



Dayton's race for Space Command HQ

By London Bishop - lbishop@aimmediamidwest.com – June 26, 2020

COLUMBUS — Rep. Rick Perales joined lawmakers from across Ohio in endorsing Wright-Patterson Air Force Base for the site of the United States Space Command Headquarters.

“As an Air Force veteran and advocate for making Ohio the most military and family-friendly and veteran-friendly state in the union, I believe there is no better place to land the headquarters than the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base,” Perales (R-Beavercreek) said in a release.

In addition to WPAFB, the Dayton area is home to the National Air and Space Intelligence Center (NASIC), the Springfield Air National Guard Base, and the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT).

“There’s a critical mass of talent,” said John Boyd, principal of the Boyd Company, a New Jersey-based site selection firm. The firm has been active in the aerospace industry and has been closely watching the selection process for Space Command.

“Not enough people realize the amount of intellectual capital in the labor market,” he added

The New Economy Index ranks Dayton fifth among metropolitan areas for new degrees granted in Science and Engineering.

Wright-Patterson’s geographical environment is another unique selling point. The base has easy access to the Dayton metropolitan area, but also has the suburban environment and low cost of living that provide huge advantages for new institutions.

“The next frontier of economic development is these type of government agencies decentralizing out of the beltway,” said Boyd. “Site-seeking companies and government agencies, there’s a desire for more suburban location. The Dayton region is the best of both worlds.”

The coronavirus pandemic may have also contributed to the demand for suburban infrastructure.

“A positive post-COVID economic takeaway is an overall trend toward smaller, more suburban markets that enjoy a lower cost profile,” Boyd added.

Florida and Texas are currently Ohio's two biggest competitors for the headquarters. But even if Dayton does not secure the site, WPAFB may still play a vital role in Space Command operations for years to come, Boyd explained.

"This coalition will serve Dayton well for future projects. Ohio has an opportunity to use this platform to promote itself as a center of excellence in the aerospace industry," Boyd said. "Should the headquarters go to another state, it's likely that the relationships forged here will result in some type of research activity staying at Wright-Patterson."