

HANCOCK COUNTY PORT & HARBOR COMMISSION

AVIATION & AEROSPACE CLUSTER OPTIMIZATION 2.0

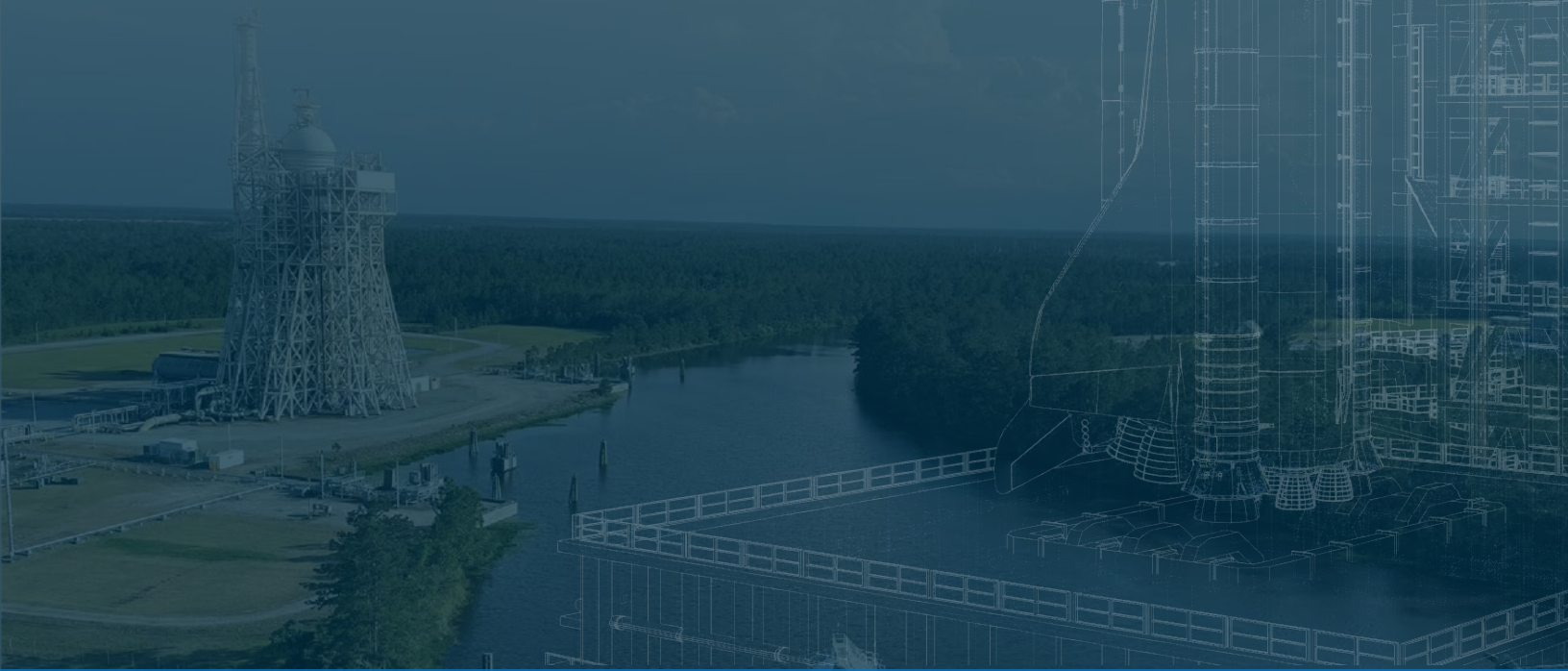


Table of Contents

03	Project Overview
04	Approach
05	A Look Back (Hancock County/Laborshed)
08	A Look Back (at Aviation and Aerospace)
13	Situation Analysis
16	The Voice of Stakeholders
18	Highest and Best Use of Existing Assets and Industry
26	Airport and Aviation Forecast for the Southeast
30	Strategies for Attracting Aerospace and Aviation Industries
33	Marketing/Communications Outcomes & Channels
33	Outreach Tools
40	Marketing Metrics and Measures
42	The Aerospace, Aviation, and Defense Industry Today
48	HCPHC Recommendations

Project Overview

The ever-changing global economy has changed the outlook for investment, trade, and development. How communities build innovation during this shifting marketplace will shape economies. Now is the time to critically evaluate opportunities for the future. Opportunities abound to work together to reshape marketing, create new partnerships, identify educational opportunities and leverage technologies. **How Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission innovates and aligns assets will continue shape the county's trajectory.**

Approach

To ensure sustained growth and optimal utilization of its robust aviation and aerospace resources, the Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission (HCPHC) has once again engaged VisionFirst Advisors to enhance and update its aerospace and aviation cluster optimization strategy. This initiative is designed to capitalize on existing strengths and identify new opportunities within the sector, driving forward a comprehensive plan that maximizes the region's competitive advantages and fosters long-term success in the aviation and aerospace industries.

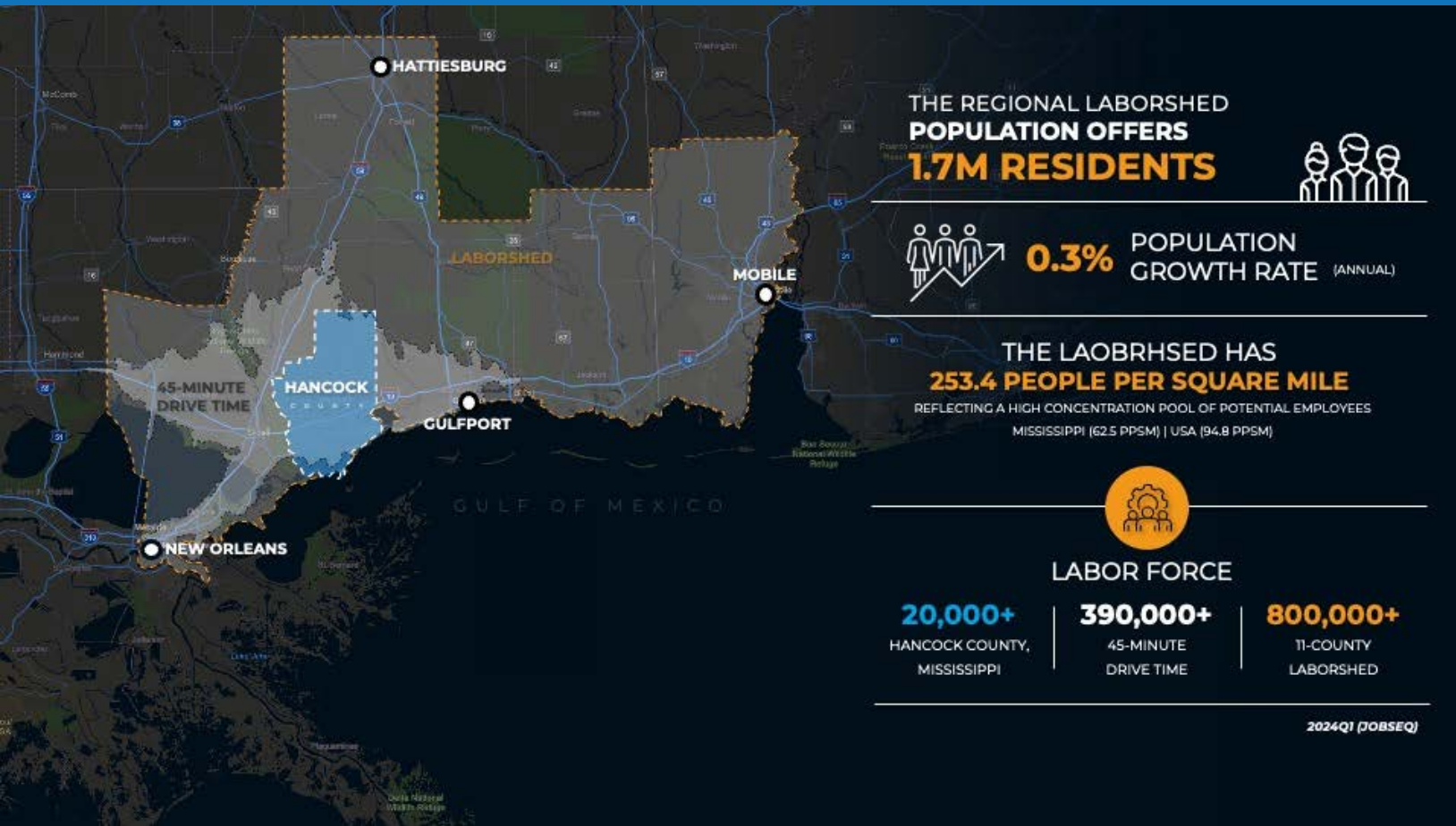
The plan on the following pages provides a pathway to successful alignment strategies focused on HCPHC's outlined objectives:

- Leverage innovation in the industry through the development of a strategic effort that capitalizes on short-term opportunities but concurrently creates a foundation for long-term growth.
- Develop a comprehensive talent pipeline – jobs and skills at all levels – to support the continued growth of the cluster.
- Fully utilize all available assets – both terrestrial and aerospace – in a manner that is congruent to both Stennis International Airport and Stennis Space Center's needs to foster increased job creation and capital investment.

In addition, the optimization plan for the aerospace and aviation industry specifically offers:

- Strategies to enhance HCPHC's competitive position through analysis of the current workforce, educational opportunities and talent development partnerships.
- Recommendations for best and highest use of all available products based on asset inventory, analysis, benchmarking, and best practices.
- Tactics to encourage cooperation and integration between facilities, organizations, and the region overall to increase industry attraction, retention and expansion activities.
- Recommendations for economic development strategy.





A Look Back (by the Numbers/Investments)

Hancock County and the 11-county laborshed has experienced a range of changes in economic development within the past five years. Many for the positive and increasing the region’s attractiveness for continued business development and growth.

- Business Growth:** The 11-county laborshed indicates a healthy and stable economy, for current and future business growth.



2. **Infrastructure Improvements:** Investment in infrastructure—such as roads and utilities—plays a key role in economic development. Hancock County has seen improvements in these areas to support both existing and new businesses. These infrastructure improvements reflect the county’s commitment to fostering growth, enhancing quality of life, and supporting its role as a key player in the Gulf Coast region’s economy.

- **Highway Improvements:** Numerous road projects have been undertaken to enhance connectivity and support economic growth. This includes improvements to major highways like U.S. Highway 90 and Mississippi Highway 603, which are crucial for regional transport and commerce.
- **Port Infrastructure Enhancements:** There have been significant investments in Port Bienville —most recently awarded a \$7.32 million in Transportation-Housing & Urban Development funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation as part of the FY24 appropriations bill, specifically designated for the Port Bienville Railroad Intermodal Expansion Project. Improvements are enhancing the Port’s capabilities for handling cargo and supporting maritime trade. Other upgrades include enhancements to docking facilities and cargo handling equipment as well.
- **Water and Sewer System Modernization:** Upgrades to water and sewer systems have been implemented to ensure reliable services that support residential and commercial growth. This includes replacing old pipes, expanding capacity, and upgrading water treatment facilities.
- **Public Facility Improvements:** Investments in local parks and recreational facilities have been made to improve public spaces for residents. This includes enhancements to existing parks and the development of new recreational areas.
- **Industrial Parks:** Development of new industrial parks and a business incubator at Stennis Space Center (SSC) has been a focus to attract and support new businesses, particularly in advanced technology sectors like aerospace and manufacturing.
- **Flood Mitigation:** Efforts to improve flood control infrastructure and enhance resilience against natural disasters have been a priority. This includes investing in levees, drainage systems, and other flood prevention measures.
- **Educational and Research Facilities:** Significant investments have been made in infrastructure at Stennis Space Center, enhancing its testing facilities and research capabilities. Two of Mississippi’s four research universities have active

research facilities within the center as well. This supports both space exploration and regional economic development.

3. **Workforce Development:** Efforts to enhance the local workforce through education and training programs will impact economic development. Pearl River Community College’s Hancock Aviation Aerospace Workforce Academy will introduce new educational initiatives and partnerships with businesses to improve job skills. Program details include:

- Offers comprehensive training in aircraft engine and system inspection, repair and servicing.
- Prepares students for FAA exams to obtain Aircraft Maintenance Technician Airframe and Powerplant (A&P) rating.
- Provides classroom theory and hands-on training on FAA-certified aircraft.
- Produces FAA-certified AMTs who are crucial for aircraft safety and efficiency, covering topics such as physics, aerodynamics and engine structures.

Each year, throughout the laborshed, education partners are awarding certificates and degrees in high-demand technical fields such as welding, machinist, technicians, as well as professional degrees in accounting, medical, finance, and information technology.

- Nearly **22,500 High School Graduates** or Equivalent (Annually)
- More Than **108,000 Enrolled** in Post-Secondary Education
- **At 25 Higher Education Institutions**
 - » Nearly **30,000** Post-Secondary Education Awards (Annually), including:
 - » More Than **2,000 Manufacturing** Related Program Awards
 - » Nearly **2,500 Transportation, Distribution & Logistics** Program Awards
 - » Nearly **5,500 Stem** Program Awards

JOBSEQ » DATA AS OF THE **2021-2022** ACADEMIC YEAR



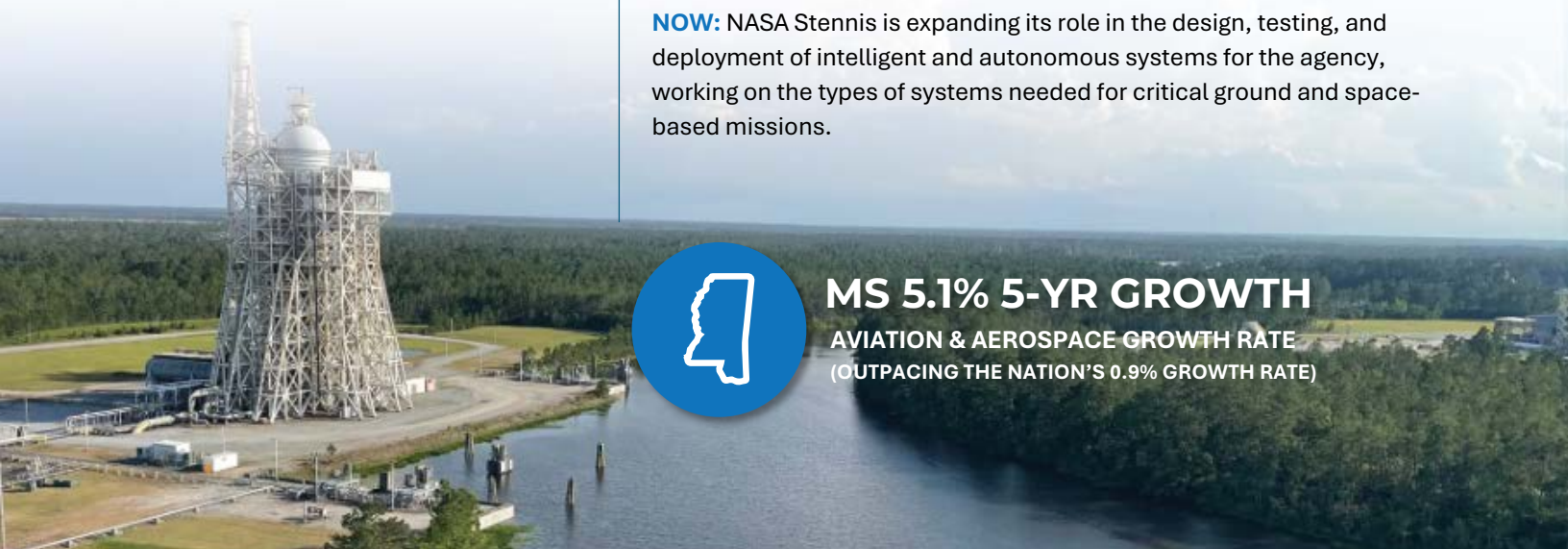
A Look Back (at Aviation & Aerospace)

Over the past five years, Hancock County, the gulf coast region, and Mississippi have seen notable changes in the aerospace and defense sector, which are driven by various factors including investment, development, and strategic initiatives.

America's Largest Rocket Propulsion Test Site

THEN: Since 1961, NASA's Stennis Space Center (Hancock County, MS) operates as NASA's primary, and America's largest, rocket propulsion test site, serving NASA, the department of defense and commercial sector with unique capabilities and expertise.

NOW: NASA Stennis is expanding its role in the design, testing, and deployment of intelligent and autonomous systems for the agency, working on the types of systems needed for critical ground and space-based missions.



MS 5.1% 5-YR GROWTH
 AVIATION & AEROSPACE GROWTH RATE
 (OUTPACING THE NATION'S 0.9% GROWTH RATE)

Expansion of Aerospace Facilities: Hancock County, home to Stennis Space Center, is a major hub for aerospace activities, including rocket testing and space exploration. Over the past five years, there has been continued investment in this facility, which has contributed to the region's growth in the aerospace sector. This includes:

- **Infrastructure Expansions:** SSC has expanded its testing facilities and infrastructure to support a new generation of space exploration missions. This includes upgrades to existing test stands along with construction of new ones, such as the addition of the B-2 test stand, which is crucial for testing the Space Launch System (SLS) engines.
- **Commercial Partnerships:** There has been a notable increase in collaboration with commercial space companies. Companies including Blue Origin and Aerojet Rocketdyne have established operations at SSC, using its facilities for testing and development purposes. This trend reflects the growing role of private companies in space exploration and technology.
- **Research and Development:** Stennis has focused on advancing its research capabilities, particularly in the areas of propulsion and propulsion systems. This includes work on advanced rocket engines and technologies to support NASA's Artemis program and other deep-space exploration missions.
- **Workforce and Community Engagement:** The SSC has also been active in expanding its workforce and enhancing community outreach. Efforts to engage with local schools and communities have been increased, including educational programs and public events to inspire future generations in STEM fields.
- **Sustainability Initiatives:** In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on sustainability and environmental stewardship. Stennis has implemented initiatives to improve energy efficiency and reduce its environmental footprint, aligning with broader goals of sustainability within NASA and the federal government.

Increased Defense Contracts: The defense sector has seen an increase in contracts and funding. With a focus on national security and defense technology, companies in Hancock County and the gulf coast region have secured new contracts for developing and maintaining defense systems, including:

- **Blue Origin's Engine Testing:** Blue Origin, a major player in the aerospace sector, has secured contracts to use Stennis Space Center for testing its BE-4 rocket engines. This partnership aligns with broader defense and space exploration objectives, supporting both NASA and potential defense-related missions.
- **Aerojet Rocketdyne Contracts:** Aerojet Rocketdyne continues to be involved in defense contracts related to rocket propulsion systems. The company utilizes

facilities at Stennis for testing and developing advanced propulsion technologies, which have applications in both civilian space exploration and defense.

- **HII (Huntington Ingalls Industries):** HII, a leading defense contractor, operates shipbuilding and technology facilities in the Mississippi Gulf Coast region. While primarily focused on naval shipbuilding, HII's work often intersects with defense-related research and technology development, including contracts related to naval defense systems.
- **NASA's Artemis Program:** As part of the Artemis program, which aims to return humans to the Moon and beyond, Stennis Space Center has been involved in various contracts related to engine testing and rocket development. These contracts support both NASA's mission objectives and potential defense applications.

Collaboration with Private Sector: The region has seen enhanced collaboration between public agencies, like the Stennis Space Center, and private companies. These partnerships lead to advancements in technology and new business opportunities.

- **Aerojet Rocketdyne + Stennis Space Center**

Partnership: Aerojet Rocketdyne, a major player in rocket propulsion, has engaged with SSC for testing and development of advanced rocket engines. The use of SSC's test facilities enhances Aerojet Rocketdyne's ability to deliver cutting-edge technology for space exploration and defense.

Impact: The partnership helps maintain SSC's role as a leading testing site while supporting Aerojet Rocketdyne's objectives in both commercial and defense sectors.

- **NASA's Artemis Program + Local Contractors**

Partnership: Local companies in the Gulf Coast region have been involved in various aspects of NASA's Artemis program, which aims to return humans to the Moon. This includes contracts for components and services related to rocket systems and mission support.

Impact: This collaboration drives technological advancement and provides economic benefits to the region by leveraging local expertise and resources.

- **Mississippi Enterprise for Technology (MSET)**

Partnership: MSET, a non-profit organization affiliated with SSC, fosters collaboration between public agencies and private companies. It supports the commercialization of space technology and helps local businesses connect with federal research opportunities.

Impact: MSET's efforts help bridge the gap between public research and private industry, facilitating innovation and business growth in the region.

– **Gulf Coast Community College and Industry Partnerships**

Partnership: Local educational institutions, such as Gulf Coast Community College, collaborate with companies and agencies to align educational programs with industry needs. This includes specialized training programs in aerospace and defense technologies.

Impact: By developing a skilled workforce that meets the demands of private companies and public agencies, these partnerships support regional industry growth and job creation.

– **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Local Contractors**

Partnership: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers frequently collaborates with local contractors for infrastructure projects in the Gulf Coast region. This includes flood control, environmental restoration, and construction projects.

Impact: These collaborations enhance regional infrastructure and resilience, benefiting both public safety and local economic development.

– **Alliance for Systems Safety of UAS through Research Excellence (ASSURE)**

Partnership: ASSURE is an FFA Center of Excellence comprised of 30 of the world's leading research institutions and more than a hundred leading industry and government partners led by Mississippi State University. ASSURE members are core to four FAA UAS test sites, lead four FAA research centers, and have a multitude of UAS ranging from small drones below 55 pounds to the largest UAS at any US academic institution at 1800 pounds. This alliance features expertise across a broad spectrum of research areas, including: Air traffic control interoperability, UAS airport ground operations, control and communications, detect and avoid, human factors, UAS noise reduction, UAS wake signatures, unmanned aircraft pilot training and certification, low altitude operations safety, spectrum management and UAS traffic management.

Impact: MSU's leadership in this Center of Excellence can provide both SSC and the region with unique opportunities to participate in research, testing and ultimately manufacturing and maintenance being funded by both the FAA and affected industries, and other governmental agencies dependent on these emerging technologies. Overall, Hancock County and the gulf coast region have experienced substantial growth and transformation in the aerospace and defense sector, driven by increased investment, technological advancements, and strategic initiatives aimed at strengthening this critical industry.

Situation Analysis

COLLABORATION SPAWNS INNOVATION

Aerospace and aviation have long captured our imagination, from the Wright Brothers' first flight to Neil Armstrong's moon landing. The United States has led these endeavors, continually seeking answers to profound questions while advancing innovations that impact daily life. Although federal investment in space exploration has waned, private industry is making substantial strides in space and unmanned technologies.

Current Landscape

Aerospace companies are making significant technological advancements, particularly in unmanned systems—whether aerial, terrestrial, or submersible. Leading firms like SpaceX, Blue Origin, Sierra Nevada, and Boeing are at the forefront of this transformation. As regulatory bodies such as the FAA work to integrate unmanned systems into mainstream airspace, the Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) market is expected to experience exponential growth.

Hancock County, with over 50 years of aerospace and aviation history, is well-positioned for research, development, testing, and manufacturing. Stennis Space Center, the county's premier site for rocket engine testing since 1961, offers unique advantages. Its 13,800-acre facility, surrounded by a 125,000-acre acoustical buffer zone, presents exceptional opportunities for aerospace innovation.

Challenges and Opportunities

Despite its advantages, Hancock County faces several challenges:

1. **Coordination with NASA:** Collaboration between NASA missions and private sector development within Stennis Space Center is improving, but the current financial model for private sector initiatives remains a barrier.
2. **Buffer Zone Utilization:** The 125,000-acre buffer zone offers potential for rocket and unmanned system testing, but a hybrid model would be ideal to leverage both the unique attributes for the SSC and the surrounding area assets. (e.g. Testing (inside the fence) and manufacturing (outside the fence)).
3. **Entrepreneurial Space Development:** There is a need to develop co-working or flexible spaces to attract entrepreneurial projects focused on emerging technologies in Hancock County.

4. **Perception and Competitiveness:** Hancock County and Mississippi need to enhance their image as competitive locations for the space industry. Improved storytelling, supported by data and results, is essential to shift perceptions positively.
5. **Workforce Development:** Addressing workforce challenges is crucial for attracting and retaining industry players in Hancock County.

Strategic Priorities

1. **Enhance Coordination:** Strengthen collaboration between NASA, private sector companies, and other stakeholders. Address financial and operational barriers to maximize opportunities within Stennis Space Center.
2. **Optimize Buffer Zone Use:** Develop a hybrid model that leverages the buffer zone for both traditional and emerging economic activities, such as integrating small-scale testing and manufacturing operations.
3. **Foster Innovation Spaces:** Establish co-working and flexible spaces to support the growth of entrepreneurial ventures in aerospace and aviation technology.
4. **Improve Regional Perception:** Develop a comprehensive strategy to promote Hancock County and Mississippi as leading locations for space industry development, using data-driven narratives to enhance regional competitiveness.
5. **Advance Workforce Development:** Implement strategies to address workforce challenges, including training programs and partnerships with educational institutions.
6. **ASSURE:** Implement strategies to identify partnerships and opportunities for HCPHC to coordinate area assets and provide updated capabilities of the area.

The Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission (HCPHC) will serve as the catalyst for aligning resources and stakeholders, driving a cohesive program of work that clearly communicates the value proposition of the region. By leveraging its assets and collaborating with federal partners, academic institutions, and industry leaders, HCPHC will foster a robust and dynamic aerospace and aviation cluster.

Implementation and Growth

Building on existing economic development frameworks, this strategic plan outlines actionable and implementable strategies to position Hancock County as a premier destination for aerospace and aviation leaders. Through focused efforts and collaboration, the community will enhance its economic landscape and support long-term growth in the aerospace sector.

The Voice of Stakeholders

The initial step to update HCPHC's aviation and aerospace cluster optimization plan focused on obtaining the voice of community leaders, businesses and federal partner leadership. VisionFirst conducted in-person interviews and facilitated discussions gathering key stakeholder input, based on interviews scheduled by the HCPHC.

This open dialogue provided context as VisionFirst evaluated progress since the initial plan and developed strategies that reflect the priorities of the community, focusing on existing challenges identified and developing strategies to ensure the highest and best use of the community's assets.

Although the interviews elicited important baseline information, the strategies recommended are not merely a compilation of the feedback provided. Instead, they are built around the firm's insight, experience and industry best practices as well as empirical data gathered related to the community.



Cost is a significant barrier when considering locating a manufacturing operation at Stennis



Stennis is not easy or quick to deal with, and for many projects, additional time introduces additional risk



We can hire technicians but can't find engineers – especially entry level



Our facility experienced a 27% increase in our shared services agreement (at Stennis Space Center)

The interviews conducted covered a range of subjects, including the resources needed to further utilize all the community's aviation and aerospace assets. These included discussing the community's and region's strengths and weaknesses, education and workforce, potential opportunities and barriers as well as the ability to leverage federal assets under the next presidential administration.

The findings outlined below are a summary of the viewpoints expressed during the interviews and are not necessarily the expression of a single individual or VisionFirst Advisors.

- **HCPHC's leadership, staff, and level of engagement is still considered a positive.**
 - Partners are pleased with HCPHC's leadership.
 - Stakeholders believe that HCPHC understands the needs of industry and are looking for ways to add economic development assets and address challenges.
- **There exists a level of skepticism regarding the ability to engage all the necessary partners to experience transformational economic development.**
 - Challenges exist related to contracting with NASA. NASA's new Business Development Officer should improve the process to establish contracts within Stennis Space Center, but this is a new endeavor. Improved relationships between HCPHC and NASA need to be developed and maintained.
 - The costs related to shared services within the Stennis Space Center continue to increase.
- **Opportunities exist for Hancock County, but additional assets are needed for success.**
 - Consideration must be given to developing Hancock County's Technology Park and marketing an economic development solution that includes a hybrid approach with locations both within Stennis Space Center and outside the gates. This model will provide a lower cost solution, especially for manufacturing in addition to R&D and testing.
 - There is a need for economic development product development. Additional hangar space is needed to attract aerospace industry. Extending the County's Airport runway would open additional opportunities. A spec building would also help to attract targeted industries – especially mid-tier Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) companies.
- **Workforce remains the biggest challenge for Industry.**
 - Because of the relatively small size of the community, questions remain about the availability of the workforce.
 - There appears to be some disconnection between workforce training and an integrated workforce solution. Industry has some confidence that they can find

and train technicians, but engineering and professional staff continue to be difficult and go unfilled.

- There is the perception that the existing vocational training programs are not being updated as technologies change.
- Custom training is an issue for industry in the area. PRCC has recently opened a new facility in Hancock County, but the facility is already full, which limits opportunities for custom training needed by both existing and industries.
- Retention of talent remains an issue. Discussions with existing industries related to exit interview findings may help identify primary reasons for resignation or industry actions. Once an understanding of the root causes for turnover is identified, remediation solutions can be identified and costs potentially shared across industries or with other economic development partners. Actions may include wage and benefit surveys, management training, or non-standard offerings such as flexible scheduling or remote work opportunities.

Highest and Best Use of Existing Assets and Industry

While Hancock County and the surrounding region are fortunate to possess many man-made and natural assets attractive to the aerospace industry, the area has never fully realized its potential as a globally recognized cluster. **To address this challenge, it is important to first understand the physical assets that exist and how each should be utilized.**



There are two major assets directly owned by HCPHC: **Stennis International Airport** and **Port Bienville Industrial Park**.

Diamondhead Airport, while privately owned does offer a potential third option for industry location. Finally, while located in Pearl River County, the Picayune Airport could potentially provide a regional impact.

With an 8,500-foot runway at Stennis International including connectivity to rail and port access, there are few industries that would not find a logical fit in the region from a transportation standpoint. The attraction of aerospace, however, must take a more rifled approach. While assembly, MRO and cargo sectors garner the most attention in the aerospace industry, it is not recommended that HCPHC place a majority of the focus on these areas. Outlined on the following pages, there are certain factors that indicate the need to shift the focus to other more appropriate targets.

The first approach should be mining and developing the existing companies in the area for expansion opportunities. Companies such as Lockheed Martin, Rolls Royce and Aerojet Rocketdyne have multiple platforms globally, but they all appreciate the success they have in the region. For example, Lockheed Martin's Space Systems division is located at Stennis Space Center, but as one of the largest producers of unmanned vehicle production in the world, those contacts should be leveraged for introduction to the other divisions. Beyond this approach the focus must be on the viability of each asset to compete in a given sector.

The following pages address the physical assets and our recommendations of sector potential and probable targets.

01 Stennis International Airport:

Attributes //

1. **Strategic Location: Proximity to Stennis Space Center** - Located near a key NASA facility, providing access to advanced aerospace and defense technologies.
Access to Major Transportation Networks - Well-connected to major highways as well as both rail and maritime transportation corridors, facilitating regional, national, and even global connectivity.
2. **Advanced Infrastructure: Runways and Facilities** - Equipped with modern runways and hangars capable of handling various types of aircraft, including larger cargo and passenger planes. **Support Facilities** - Includes amenities such as customs and border protection services, fueling stations, and maintenance facilities.
3. **Economic and Industrial Hub: Adjacent to Technology and Research Centers** - Located near high-tech industries and research centers, fostering a collaborative

environment for innovation. **Growth Potential** - Positioned to attract additional businesses and industries due to its strategic location and existing infrastructure.

Challenges //

1. **Maintenance and Upgrades:** Ongoing costs for maintaining and upgrading infrastructure to meet evolving industry standards.
2. **Limited Industry Diversification and Dependency on Specific Sectors:** Heavy reliance on aerospace and defense sectors, which may limit the diversification of industries and economic resilience.
3. **Competition from Other Airports (Regional Competition):** Competing with other airports in the region that may offer similar or superior facilities and incentives to attract businesses.

Opportunities //

1. **Industry Collaboration and Growth: Partnerships with NASA and Stennis Space Center** - Leverage proximity to collaborate on aerospace, defense, and technology projects, and attract companies involved in these fields. **Expansion of Business Services** - Develop additional business services and facilities to cater to a broader range of industries, including logistics and manufacturing.
 - **Example:** Poll existing industries and identify needed contract services that are needed, too expensive, or are lacking quality. Based on feedback, work with local entrepreneurs to establish a new company that can fulfill unmet needs and grow a new industry.
2. **Incentive Programs: Tailored Incentives** - Explore opportunities to offer financial incentives or reduced operational costs to attract new tenants and industries. **Customizable Facilities** - Provide adaptable spaces and services that can be customized to meet the specific needs of different industries.
 - **Example:** Develop an incentive strategy that utilizes HCPHC goals, target industries, and existing assets to build a roadmap or incentives that can be offered to new and existing industries dependent on investment, jobs, and wages.
3. **Workforce Development and Training: Skilled Workforce** - Utilize partnerships with local educational institutions and training programs to ensure a steady pipeline of skilled workers for industries based at the airport. **Professional Development** – Advocate for programs that enhance workforce skills, particularly in high-demand fields related to aerospace and technology.
 - **Example:** Reach out to universities in the region to identify alternative ways that full-time employees can work toward technical degrees in their fields. For

instance, MSU worked with Nissan to develop a Bachelor of Science degree for Nissan employees in industrial maintenance who aspired to move into management positions requiring a 4-year degree. The program is offered online, with limited “in-person” labs offered on weekends.

02 Port Bienville:

Attributes //

1. **Strategic Location:** Port Bienville benefits from its location on the Gulf Coast, providing direct access to major shipping lanes and facilitating trade with both domestic and international markets.
2. **Industrial Park:** The port area includes an industrial park that supports various industries, including manufacturing, logistics, and distribution. This creates a diverse economic base and attracts different types of businesses.
3. **Infrastructure:** The port is equipped with essential infrastructure such as roads, rail, docks, storage facilities, and transportation links. This helps streamline operations and supports efficient cargo handling.
4. **Economic Impact:** The port plays a significant role in the regional economy, contributing to job creation and economic development in the surrounding areas.
5. **Environmental Stewardship:** Port Bienville has initiatives aimed at environmental protection and sustainability, helping to balance industrial activity with ecological considerations.

Challenges //

1. **Infrastructure Maintenance:** Maintaining and upgrading port infrastructure can be costly and challenging, particularly with the need to integrate evolving industry standards and technologies.
2. **Economic Fluctuations:** The port's economic performance can be affected by fluctuations in global trade, commodity prices, and economic downturns, which can impact cargo volumes and revenue.
3. **Environmental Regulations:** Compliance with increasingly stringent environmental regulations can be challenging and may require significant investment in technology and processes.
4. **Competition:** The port faces competition from other regional ports that might offer similar or more advanced facilities, which can affect its attractiveness to potential clients.

5. **Natural Disasters:** Being on the Gulf Coast, Port Bienville is susceptible to natural disasters such as hurricanes, which can disrupt operations and require extensive recovery efforts.

Opportunities //

1. **Trade Growth:** As global trade continues to grow, there is an opportunity for Port Bienville to expand its operations and increase its market share by leveraging its strategic location.
2. **Infrastructure Development:** Investing in modernizing and expanding port infrastructure could enhance efficiency and attract more business. This might include upgrading cargo handling facilities and improving transportation links. A great solution would be to create a partnership with a new or existing industry at the port and utilize new property taxes collected as part of a payment in lieu of taxes to fund the needed infrastructure.
3. **Diversification:** Expanding into new sectors or services, such as renewable energy or technology-driven logistics, could open new revenue streams and reduce reliance on traditional industries.
4. **Partnerships and Collaborations:** Developing partnerships with other ports, businesses, and governmental agencies can create synergies and enhance the port's capabilities and reach.
5. **Sustainability Initiatives:** Embracing green technologies and sustainable practices can improve the port's environmental footprint and appeal to clients who prioritize sustainability.

Opportunities relating to Stennis Space Center //

Port Bienville has several opportunities related to the Stennis Space Center, which can enhance its strategic importance and economic development. Key opportunities include:

1. **Aerospace and Defense Collaborations:** Companies at Port Bienville can partner with Stennis for research and development in aerospace technologies, propulsion systems, and satellite systems.
2. **Supply Chain and Logistics Support:** The port can serve as a logistical hub for Stennis, providing transportation and storage solutions for materials and equipment needed for testing and development.
3. **Business Incubation:** Establishing incubators or accelerators focused on aerospace startups can attract new businesses looking to innovate in the space sector.

4. **Tourism and Public Engagement:** Promoting educational tours and public events related to space exploration can boost tourism and community engagement in the area.
5. **Federal Contracting Opportunities:** Companies at Port Bienville can pursue federal contracts related to aerospace, benefiting from the presence of Stennis as a prime testing and research facility.
6. **Research Partnerships:** Collaborating on research projects with universities and government entities associated with Stennis can drive innovation and attract funding.

These opportunities can help Port Bienville capitalize on its proximity to the Stennis Space Center, driving economic growth and establishing it as a significant player in the aerospace sector.

03 Diamondhead Airport (2R1 – FAA location code):

Diamondhead Airport, located in Diamondhead, Mississippi, serves as a general aviation airport and is privately owned.

Attributes //

1. **Location:** Situated in Diamondhead, a growing community on the Gulf Coast, the airport benefits from proximity to both local and regional destinations.
2. **General Aviation Focus:** The airport is tailored for general aviation rather than commercial airline traffic, making it an ideal hub for private and recreational pilots, as well as small business aviation.
3. **Runway and Facilities:** Diamondhead Airport's 3,800 ft runway and basic facilities are suited for small aircraft operations, including private planes and light jets.
4. **Community Integration:** The airport plays a role in the local community, supporting recreational flying and serving as a local hub for small businesses and tourism.
5. **Accessibility:** Its location provides convenient access for residents and businesses in the Diamondhead area and surrounding regions.

Challenges //

1. **Limited Infrastructure:** As a general aviation airport, Diamondhead may have limited infrastructure compared to larger airports, which can restrict its capacity and services.
2. **Funding and Maintenance:** Securing funding for maintenance and improvements can be challenging, especially given the limited revenue streams typical for general aviation airports.

3. **Regulatory Compliance:** The airport must comply with various Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations and standards, which can be complex and costly.
4. **Weather Dependence:** Being on the Gulf Coast, Diamondhead Airport is susceptible to weather-related disruptions, such as hurricanes and severe storms, which can impact operations.
5. **Competition:** The airport competes with other nearby general aviation facilities and regional airports, which might offer more extensive services or more modern facilities.

Opportunities //

1. **Development and Expansion:** There is potential for expanding and upgrading airport facilities to accommodate a broader range of aircraft and services, including potential improvements to the runway and hangar space.
2. **Community and Business Growth:** As the Diamondhead area grows, increased demand for general aviation services could drive higher traffic and business opportunities at the airport.
3. **Tourism and Recreation:** The airport can capitalize on local tourism by promoting flying experiences, air tours, and other recreational activities, which could attract visitors and generate additional revenue.
4. **Partnerships:** Collaborating with local businesses, government entities, and aviation organizations could enhance the airport's services and funding opportunities, as well as improve community engagement.
5. **Sustainability Initiatives:** Implementing green technologies and sustainable practices can enhance the airport's appeal and operational efficiency, while also aligning with broader environmental goals.

04 Picayune Airport (KPIB - ICAO airport code)

Picayune Airport, situated in Picayune, Mississippi, serves as a general aviation facility. Although HCPHC does not have jurisdiction over the airport due to its location outside the county, its proximity to Hancock County means it could potentially have a regional impact.

Attributes //

1. **Location:** Positioned in Picayune, a city near the Mississippi-Louisiana border, the airport is strategically located to serve the local community and surrounding areas.
2. **General Aviation Focus:** The airport is geared towards general aviation, including private and recreational flying, as well as small business aviation.

3. **Facilities:** It typically has basic infrastructure including a 5,000 ft runway, taxiways, and hangars that support small aircraft operations. The airport may also offer services such as fuel and maintenance for general aviation aircraft.
4. **Community Role:** The airport plays a significant role in the local community, providing access for residents and businesses and supporting regional economic activities.
5. **Accessibility:** Its location offers convenient access for small aircraft operations, facilitating travel and transportation within the region.

Challenges // (Hancock County has no control over the airport since it's outside the County)

1. **Funding and Investment:** Provide advice and counsel to help secure adequate funding for ongoing maintenance and infrastructure improvements can be challenging, particularly for a general aviation airport with limited revenue streams.
2. **Limited Facilities:** The airport's facilities may be basic compared to larger commercial airports, which can limit its capacity and the range of services it can offer.
3. **Weather Impacts:** Located in a region prone to severe weather, including hurricanes and heavy storms, the airport is susceptible to weather-related disruptions that can impact operations and require costly repairs.
4. **Regulatory Compliance:** Adhering to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations and safety standards requires ongoing investment and can be complex for smaller airports.
5. **Competition:** The airport faces competition from other nearby general aviation facilities, which may offer more advanced amenities or better services.

Opportunities //

1. **Infrastructure Development:** There is potential for upgrading and expanding airport facilities, such as enhancing the runway, adding more hangars, or improving terminal amenities, to better accommodate a range of aircraft and increase capacity.
2. **Economic Growth:** As Picayune and the surrounding region grow, there may be increased demand for general aviation services. The airport could attract more business and recreational traffic with strategic investments and marketing.
3. **Community Engagement:** Strengthening ties with the local community through events, educational programs, or partnerships with local businesses can increase the airport's visibility and support.

4. **Tourism and Aviation Activities:** Promoting aviation-related tourism, such as scenic flights or flying events, could draw visitors and generate additional revenue for the airport.
5. **Sustainability Initiatives:** Implementing eco-friendly practices, such as energy-efficient lighting and waste reduction programs, can enhance the airport's sustainability and appeal to environmentally conscious users.

Airport and Aviation Forecast for the Southeast

The growth prospects for communities in the Southeast U.S. in terms of general airport and aviation target industries over the next five to 10 years are shaped by several key factors and trends:

Increased Regional Demand for Air Travel

- **Passenger Growth:** As the population in the Southeast U.S. continues to grow, regional airports are expected to see an increase in passenger traffic. This growth is driven by economic development, population expansion, and tourism. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the South has been the only region to sustain population growth. In 2023, this growth was primarily driven by migration trends: net domestic migration added 706,266 people to the region, while net international migration contributed nearly 500,000 individuals, according to the [U.S. Census](#).
- **Economic Development:** Regions with expanding industries such as technology, manufacturing, and logistics are likely to see increased demand for air travel. Airports in these areas will benefit from both passenger and cargo traffic.

Growth in General Aviation and Business Aviation

According to industry reports, general aviation aircraft sales have risen substantially, with light jet and turboprop sales seeing particular growth. The overall 2023 general aviation shipments and billings, when compared to 2022, saw increases for all aircraft segments in shipments and preliminary aircraft deliveries were valued at \$28.3 billion, an increase of 3.3%, according to [gama.aero](#).

- **Business Hubs:** The Southeast is becoming a hub for business aviation, with increased demand for general aviation services. Airports are expanding facilities to cater to private jets, charter services, and business travel.
- **Recreational Aviation:** As more individuals and organizations invest in personal and recreational aircraft, general aviation airports are likely to see growth in hangar space and support services.

Advancements in Aviation Technology

- **Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS):** The rise of drones and UAS technology is expected to drive growth in specialized aviation sectors. Airports and communities are preparing to integrate these technologies into their operations and infrastructure. According to [grandviewresearch.com](#), “the North America region is expected to grow at a significant **compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 9.9%** between 2023 and 2030, owing to the ongoing advancements in drone technology, favorable government initiatives, and growing demand from enterprises across numerous industries. For instance, in the U.S., the Federal Aviation Administration

(FAA) has issued new regulations to create more coherent and consistent standards for the legal and safe operation of UAVs in commercial spaces. These rules and regulations are anticipated to decrease entry barriers and boost product usage, thereby favoring market expansion further”.

- **Sustainable Aviation:** There is a growing emphasis on sustainability within the aviation industry. Airports in the Southeast are exploring green technologies and practices to reduce their environmental impact.

Economic Incentives and Investments

- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Many Southeast communities are leveraging public-private partnerships to fund airport expansions and upgrades. These partnerships can accelerate infrastructure development and attract investment.
- **Incentive Programs:** State and local governments may offer incentives to attract aviation-related businesses, including tax reductions, grants, and support for workforce development. Mississippi offers several incentives to attract aviation-related businesses. These incentives aim to foster growth in the aviation industry by providing financial benefits and support for project development.

Strategic Location Benefits

- **Logistics and Transportation:** The Southeast’s strategic location along major transportation corridors is a key advantage. Airports in this region are likely to see growth in cargo and logistics operations due to their connectivity to domestic and international markets.
- **Tourism and Trade:** Growth in tourism and trade within the Southeast will also drive demand for airport services, benefiting communities with well-positioned airports.

Regional and Federal Support

- **Federal Funding:** The availability of federal grants and funding for airport improvements and expansions will support growth in the aviation sector. Programs like the [FAA’s Airport Improvement Program \(AIP\)](#) are crucial for funding infrastructure projects.
- **Regional Planning:** Coordination among regional planning agencies, economic development organizations, and aviation authorities will help communities in the Southeast effectively manage growth and capitalize on emerging opportunities.

Overall, communities in the Southeast U.S. are forecasted to experience significant growth in the airport and aviation sectors over the next five to 10 years. This growth will be driven by increased passenger and cargo traffic, infrastructure development, advancements in aviation technology, and regional economic development. By strategically investing in infrastructure, fostering innovation, and leveraging regional advantages, communities can capitalize on these opportunities and enhance their role in the aviation industry.

Airport // Potential Target Industries:

For both the Diamondhead Airport and Picayune Airports, targeting specific industries can help diversify its operations and attract business. Given each airport's general aviation focus, the HCPHC can strategically target various industries to expand each airport's role and expand their economic impact in the region. Here are some potential industries and types of companies that could benefit from or contribute to each airports growth:

Aerospace and Aviation

- **Aircraft Maintenance and Repair Organizations (MROs):** Companies specializing in maintenance, repair, and overhaul services for small and general aviation aircraft.

Aeronautical Repair Station Association (ARSA) released its updated [Global Fleet & MRO Market Report \(2023-2033\)](#), illustrating the current and projected state of the North American and global aircraft fleets and related impacts on maintenance demand.

Today's fleet is almost back to pre-pandemic levels and in North America it is larger than in 2019, with passenger demand expected to recover fully by 2024 – due to aircraft utilization rising steadily. These factors, combined with several years of limited deliveries of new airframes have kept average fleet ages high despite retirements of older aircraft, which will drive maintenance demand over the next decade.

The market is expected to grow by a rate of 3% annually through the 2030s. More than 300,000 Americans work in aviation maintenance and production, with 56 percent working at repair stations. These individuals combine to produce almost \$63 billion in annual revenue for American firms as part of a global industry approaching \$100 billion.

- **Flight Schools:** Institutions offering pilot training, including private, commercial, and flight instructor certifications.
- **Aircraft Charter Services:** Businesses providing charter flights, air taxi services, and other on-demand aviation services.

Tourism and Recreational Aviation

- **Scenic Flight Operators:** Companies offering aerial tours of local attractions, landscapes, or historic sites.
- **Recreational Flying Clubs:** Organizations that promote flying as a hobby and may hold events or fly-ins at the airport.
- **Local Tourism Agencies:** Agencies that could use the airport to promote and facilitate travel to regional tourist destinations.

Real Estate and Development

- **Airport Infrastructure Developers:** Firms that specialize in building and managing aviation-related infrastructure, such as hangars, terminals, and office spaces.
- **Commercial Real Estate Investors:** Companies looking to develop properties around the airport for business or mixed-use purposes.

Agriculture and Forestry

- **Agricultural Aviation Services:** Businesses providing aerial applications for crop dusting, pest control, and fertilization.
- **Forestry Management:** Service companies and utilities involved in aerial surveying and monitoring of forested areas or large land tracts.

Logistics and Transportation

- **Small Cargo Operators:** Firms that specialize in transporting goods via small aircraft, offering flexible and efficient delivery options.
- **Local Delivery Services:** Companies that could use the airport for quick transport of goods to and from the region.

Emergency and Public Services

- **Medical Transport Services:** Providers of air ambulance or emergency medical evacuation services.
- **Fire and Rescue Services:** Organizations that might use the airport for rapid deployment in disaster response or firefighting efforts.

Technology and Innovation

- **Drone Operations:** Companies specializing in commercial drone services for surveying, mapping, or inspections.
- **Avionics and Aerospace Technology:** Businesses involved in developing or supplying advanced aircraft systems and technology.

Educational Institutions

- **Universities and Training Centers:** Educational institutions with aviation programs that might use the airport for hands-on training or research.

Local and Regional Businesses

- **Corporate Flight Departments:** Companies with their own aircraft that could utilize the airport for business travel and corporate flights.
- **Local Manufacturing and Industrial Companies:** Businesses that might use the airport for transporting goods or as part of their supply chain.

Strategies for Attracting Aerospace and Aviation Industries

- **Targeted Marketing:** Promote the airport’s amenities, services, and benefits to specific industries through industry publications, trade shows, and direct outreach.
- **Partnerships and Incentives:** Develop partnerships with industry associations and offer incentives like reduced landing fees, leasing options, or other perks to attract businesses.
- **Community Engagement:** Work with local business communities to understand their needs and how the airport can support them, fostering local economic growth.

Marketing Hancock County to aviation, aerospace, and defense companies for relocation or expansion involves a targeted and strategic approach. These industries are highly specialized and have specific needs and preferences when it comes to relocation. Here are some best practices to consider:

1. Understand the Industry Needs

- **Regulatory Compliance:** Highlight how your community meets industry-specific regulatory requirements.
- **Talent Pool:** Emphasize the availability of skilled labor and educational institutions providing relevant training and degrees. Highlight military retirees, such as Keesler.
- **Infrastructure:** Showcase infrastructure that supports aerospace and defense operations, such as specialized facilities, airports, and transport networks.

2. Leverage Industry Data and Trends

- **Market Research:** Use data on industry growth, trends, and key players to tailor your message.
- **Competitor Analysis:** Understand what other regions offer and position your community’s unique advantages.

3. Highlight Economic Incentives

- **Tax Benefits:** Provide information on tax incentives, grants, and other financial benefits.
- **Cost of Living:** Compare the cost of living and doing business in your community versus other locations.

4. Showcase Local Success Stories

- **Case Studies:** Share success stories of companies that have relocated or expanded in your community.

- **Testimonials:** Provide testimonials from industry leaders or satisfied businesses in the area.

5. Create a Strong Value Proposition

- **Unique Selling Points:** Clearly articulate what makes your community stand out, such as strategic location, robust infrastructure, or support services.
- **Tailored Solutions:** Offer customized solutions or packages for relocating companies.

6. Engage with Industry Associations and Networks

- **Partnerships:** Partner with industry associations, state and utility project managers, and trade groups.
- **Events and Conferences:** Attend and sponsor industry events and conferences to network and promote your community.

7. Develop Targeted Marketing Materials

- **Brochures and Presentations:** Create professional and detailed brochures and presentations tailored to the AAD sector. (HCPHC's new Aviation and Aerospace PowerPoint)
- **Digital Content:** Use digital marketing strategies such as webinars, podcasts, and targeted social media campaigns.

8. Provide Comprehensive Relocation Support

- **Relocation Services:** Offer support services such as site selection assistance, workforce recruitment, and integration support.
- **Community Integration:** Highlight the community's quality of life, including housing, schools, and amenities.

9. Establish a Local Liaison or Relocation Specialist

- **Point of Contact:** Designate a local liaison or specialist to assist with inquiries and provide personalized support.
- **One-Stop-Shop:** Act as a one-stop resource for all relocation-related questions and needs. The “white-glove-service” offered by some local economic development entities can make significant difference in the final site selection.

10. Monitor and Evaluate

- **Feedback Loop:** Collect feedback from relocating companies to continuously improve your offerings.

- **Performance Metrics:** Track the effectiveness of current marketing efforts and adjust strategies as needed. (See page 36 for performance measure metric examples)

By focusing on these best practices, HCPHC can effectively market the community to aviation, aerospace, and defense companies, highlighting the advantages and support available for their relocation needs.

Marketing/Communications Outcomes & Channels

To successfully implement the tactics outlined and reach decision-makers, HCPHC, along with economic development partners (state and utility project manager), should strive to achieve the following outcomes from its marketing and communications initiatives.

- **Awareness:** Increase awareness of the county and regional laborshed overall along with its competitive advantages, existing industry strengths, the diversity of its communities and the willingness of its partners to help companies succeed.
- **Reputation:** Enhance the region’s reputation among site selectors, commercial real estate developers, companies, entrepreneurs and existing employers, as well as national and international media, as a state and county that offers a business-friendly environment where companies and their employees will succeed.
- **Engagement:** Support the efforts of utility partners and continue to engage state and community leaders as well as potential investors in the region’s economic development efforts.
- **Recruitment:** Proactively recruit and retain business in the county. Leverage the support of regional partner organizations to position for an increase in the project pipeline and wins, with an emphasis on focus areas outlined in the strategic plan.

To realize these goals, HCPHC should utilize a mixture of marketing and communications channels. The channels are broken down into three categories: owned, earned and paid.

OWNED	EARNED	PAID
Website Social Email Marketing Case Studies Lead Generation	Stakeholder Engagement Press Releases Media Coverage Influencers Sector Reputation	Digital & Print Ads Fam Tours Conventions/Meetings In-Market Visits Existing Industry HQ Visits

Outreach Tools

The following table represents ideas for outreach tools that will support key messages, strategies and tactics. These can be used by HCPHC and their extended team of regional and state partners. This is not a comprehensive list, and it is not necessarily listed in the order of implementation.

TOOL	DESCRIPTION
<p>Messaging & Outreach (<i>Assets would need to be developed</i>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compelling and meaningful messages are vital to successful economic development. The messages will be used in interviews, digital media, presentations, web materials and other media. • Developers, business owners and others want to be assured that their investment in the region will have broad support from local leaders, residents and key partners, and consistent messaging can offer that confidence. • Audience: All • Measurement: Consistent use of messaging throughout all communications tools
<p>Top-Line Talking Points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site, state, region and county overall talking points • The importance and tactical use of incentives • Benefits of Mississippi/Coastal Mississippi to foreign direct investors • Regional benefits talking points, including mitigation of risk (i.e., natural disasters)
<p>Grasstops Outreach <i>Grasstops outreach is a strategy used in advocacy and lobbying that targets influential or prominent individuals within a community or sector, rather than focusing solely on the general public.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Messaging for local officials and stakeholders to convey to their sphere of influence • High-level talking points regarding economic development and the importance of private sector and foreign direct investment • Key accomplishments and success stories • Important metrics
<p>Fact Sheets & Infographics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site /Building sheets • Community and regional profiles

<p>Board Meetings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen board members into surrogates with key audiences • Ensure goals and metrics presented at the board meetings are also available online to the media and the public
<p>Legislative Session & Activities with Delegation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking points and/or presentations targeted specifically at state and federal legislators who can help provide additional site development funding and infrastructure assets • Leverage local success stories in communicating with legislators • Consider a partnership with SSC for federal congressional visits and messaging
<p>Leveraging Testimonials</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testimonials tell the story of why each property, county or the overall region are attractive to business
<p>Virtual Presentations <i>(See specific recommendations on later page.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual technology and virtual presentations bring a level of sophistication for EDOs. Organizations can project an image to prospects and clients that best illustrates their assets, resources and vision for growth. Through the creative use of technology, an understanding of data and a clear articulation of Hancock County’s and the region’s business benefits, effective presentations can position and communicate the value proposition to each key audience. • Utilize the non-linear workforce presentation that responds to the audience’s needs. This non-linear presentation means that you will not necessarily start at the first slide and proceed sequentially. The slides will be structured similar to a website, enabling the presenter to respond to their audience's area of interest by clicking on a topic that is hyperlinked.
<p>Conferences & Events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend and leverage industry conferences and events to inform decision-makers about the region, available sites and unique workforce programs, while gaining aerospace and defense market intelligence. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Aerospace Alliance (Annual Airshows and DC Reception) – Paris Air Show (Salon International de l’Aéronautique et de l’Espace)

Overview: One of the largest aerospace events globally, featuring major industry players.

Purpose: Showcases innovations, provides networking opportunities, and facilitates discussions on market trends.

– [Farnborough International Airshow](#)

Overview: A biennial airshow that combines trade and public events.

Purpose: Offers insights into the latest technologies and trends in aerospace and defense.

– [National Defense Industrial Association \(NDIA\) Events](#)

Overview: Hosts various conferences and forums focused on defense industry topics.

Purpose: Provides access to key decision-makers and discussions on defense procurement and policies.

– [Aerospace Industries Association \(AIA\) Events](#)

Overview: AIA organizes various events throughout the year, including forums and summits.

Purpose: Focuses on policy discussions, industry challenges, and workforce development.

– [Space Symposium](#)

Overview: An international conference on space-related topics, covering both government and commercial sectors.

Purpose: Provides networking opportunities and insights into space technology developments.

– [AIAA Propulsion and Energy Forum](#)

Overview: A technical conference focusing on propulsion and energy technologies.

Purpose: Offers opportunities to share research, innovations, and collaborate on future projects.

– [Defense and Security Equipment International \(DSEI\)](#)

Overview: A global event for the defense and security industries, showcasing military capabilities.

Purpose: Facilitates networking and partnerships among defense contractors and suppliers.	
Digital & Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are several key components to an effective integrative digital and social media approach that should be considered and utilized with all the activities listed below, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The communications efforts must be integrative, combining online with traditional communications strategies (those listed in the previous section). – The efforts must be targeted and efficient. – No single digital medium can stand alone; combine to maximize results. – The efforts are acquisition-focused to decision-making audiences and influencers. – All marketing must be optimized for desktop, tablet and mobile devices. – Marketing must contain staff contact information that is easy to find. • Audience: All • Measurement: Consistent use of messaging throughout all communications tools
Website Enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDO websites serve as the foundation for virtual marketing efforts; given the focus on a community’s online presence, the EDOs should implement several tactics to improve the user experience on the site • Enhance promotion of available sites and buildings • Enrich the workforce and education data available on the site • Provide basic tax and incentive information for the county, along with links to MDA.
Search Engine Optimization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google’s Webmaster Guidelines suggest making pages primarily for users, not search engines. That includes consideration on how pages of your website might appear in Google. Most search results are made up of three things: a title, a URL and a description. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A proper title tells visitors exactly what the page is about.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A good URL informs visitors about the structure and organization of your site as it relates to the page itself. – A thoughtful description gives visitors just enough information to assure them that the page has what they are looking for. • Analytics should track the metrics listed below and capture a user’s device and browser type, location and user path. • Measurement: Website tracking data — Sessions including new users, time on site, pages, referral sources, bounce rate
<p>Performance-Based Online Advertising & Retargeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content advertising is an extremely intent-driven medium reaching individuals at the moment of inquiry. Google offers several services based on content that can be used to promote the region, all of which target users based on behavior and demographic. Through Google, EDOs can expect high click-through rates and quality clicks. Consider the use of display banner advertising and retargeting in small campaigns. • Audience: Site selectors and decision-makers/influencers • Measurement: Reach and click-through rates • Budget: Cost per click
<p>Search Engine Marketing / Paid Search</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paid search ads appear adjacent to Google results when users search for relevant keywords or topics. Cost is determined based on a bidding process. Search ads let you determine your budget, keeping costs low. • Create search ad and determine budget and timing • Use results/measurements to determine success and adjust accordingly • Audience: Site selectors and decision-makers/influencers • Measurement: Reach and click-through rates • Budget: Cost per click
<p>Email Marketing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email marketing is a cost-effective medium for building relationships and maintaining regular contact with audiences, customers and prospects. By implementing a meaningful email marketing campaign that appeals to key audiences with a limited number of stories and messages, the EDOs can stay top of mind with their target audiences.

- Audience: Site selectors, C-level decision-makers, influencers
- Measurement: Open rates and click-throughs should be at or higher than industry averages (20% open rate and 2% click-through rate)
- **Best Practice:** Avoid sending cold emails without prior engagement or context. Meaningful relationships must have a solid foundation to start from which can be difficult to obtain from cold emails. Before sending an email to a contact you have not previously interacted with, first turn to your network to see if you have any mutual connections who could make an introduction for you. If mutual connections are not found, aim to have a low-touch engagement with the new contact to establish common ground. Check out what content they have shared/liked on social media and consider engaging with a meaningful comment or direct message to get a conversation started. After some low-touch engagement on a social platform, move to email to keep the conversation going.

Targeted, Content-Rich Email Blasts

- Identify targeted audience for limited email outreach (100–250 members)
- Develop schedule and ideas for emails that relate the benefits of the county and the available sites and workforce
- Determine frequency and timing and be consistent in delivery
- Optimize content for mobile viewing

Marketing Metrics and Measures

Tracking the effectiveness of your marketing efforts is crucial to optimizing your strategy and ensuring that you're meeting your goals. Here are some performance metrics that can be used to evaluate and adjust current marketing efforts for attracting aviation, aerospace, and defense companies:

1. Lead Generation Metrics

- **Number of Leads:** Track the number of inquiries or leads generated from marketing campaigns.
- **Lead Quality:** Assess the quality of leads by their relevance to your target audience and their potential for conversion.
- **Lead Conversion Rate:** Measure the percentage of leads that convert into actual relocation prospects or deals.

2. Engagement Metrics

- **Website Traffic:** Monitor the number of visitors to your website and the sources of that traffic.
- **Page Views and Session Duration:** Track how many pages visitors view and how long they stay on your site.
- **Social Media Engagement:** Analyze likes, shares, comments, and click-through rates on social media platforms.

3. Campaign Performance Metrics

- **Click-Through Rate (CTR):** Measure the percentage of people who click on your ads or email links compared to the total number who saw the ads.
- **Cost Per Lead (CPL):** Calculate the cost associated with acquiring a new lead through different marketing channels.
- **Return on Investment (ROI):** Evaluate the financial return on your marketing investments compared to the costs.

4. Brand Awareness Metrics

- **Share of Voice:** Assess how often your community or brand is mentioned compared to competitors.
- **Brand Sentiment:** Analyze the sentiment of mentions and discussions about your community or brand.

5. Conversion Metrics

- **Inquiry to Visit Ratio:** Track the ratio of inquiries or leads that result in actual site visits or meetings.
- **Conversion Rate:** Measure the percentage of site visits or meetings that result in a commitment or relocation decision.

6. Customer Feedback Metrics

- **Surveys and Polls:** Use surveys to gather feedback from prospects and clients about their perceptions and experiences.
- **Net Promoter Score (NPS):** Measure customer satisfaction and likelihood of recommending your community to others.

7. Content Performance Metrics

- **Content Engagement:** Track interactions with content such as downloads, views, or shares.
- **Lead Generation from Content:** Measure how effectively specific pieces of content generate leads or inquiries.

8. Event Metrics

- **Attendance:** Measure the number of attendees at industry events or webinars you host or participate in.
- **Post-Event Surveys:** Collect feedback from participants to gauge the effectiveness and impact of your event.

Adjusting Strategies Based on Metrics

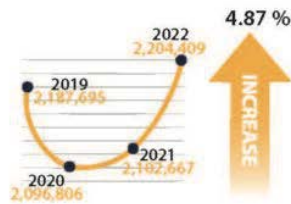
- **Refine Targeting:** If certain channels or messages are underperforming, adjust your targeting and/or messaging to better align with your audience's interests.
- **Optimize Content:** Based on engagement metrics, revise your content strategy to focus on topics and formats that resonate more with your audience.
- **Reallocate Budget:** Shift marketing budgets to higher-performing channels or campaigns based on ROI and CPL data.
- **Improve Lead Nurturing:** Enhance your lead nurturing process if the conversion rates are lower than expected, by providing more personalized content or support.

By continuously monitoring these metrics, HCPHC can gain valuable insights into what's working and what needs adjustment, allowing optimization of the marketing strategy for better results.

The Aerospace, Aviation, and Defense Industry Today

AIA AEROSPACE INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION 2023 FACTS & FIGURES U.S. AEROSPACE & DEFENSE

A&D WORKFORCE



Returning to pre-pandemic numbers, the A&D workforce increased by over 101,700 employees in 2022, a 4.87 percent increase from 2021. This represents approximately 1.47 percent of the nation's total employment base.



57.7%
of jobs stem from the supply chain



The majority of the industry's direct employment is through the commercial aerospace sector, with a 57 percent share, while defense and national security make up the remaining 43 percent.

55%
above the comparable national average



Average wages and benefits for the A&D industry rose to just over \$108,900, approximately 55 percent above the national average.

AIA AEROSPACE INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION 2023 FACTS & FIGURES U.S. AEROSPACE & DEFENSE



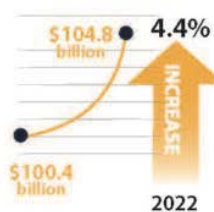
Industry sales revenue rose to \$952 billion, a 6.7 percent increase from the previous year. Every million dollars in end-use sales supports four employees across end-use manufacturing and the supply chain.

BREAKDOWN OF SALES



Of total sales revenue, \$537 billion was generated through direct industry output. The remaining \$415 billion — nearly 44% — was generated through indirect output, demonstrating the value of the domestic A&D supply chain.

A&D INDUSTRY EXPORTS



A&D industry exports rose by 4.4 percent between 2021 and 2022 to a total value of \$104.8 billion.

LEADING EXPORT DESTINATIONS



The leading destinations for U.S. A&D exports in 2022 were France, Canada, Brazil, the United Kingdom, and Germany.

“ Per the Aerospace Industries Association’s 2023 Facts and Figures—

The workforce remains the backbone of the A&D industry, powering its many contributions to the U.S. economy, innovation, and national security. After dipping in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic, employment rose beyond 2019 levels to a total workforce of 2.2 million in 2022 — the highest level since AIA

began tracking this data. A&D jobs can be found in every state and represent approximately 1.47% of the nation’s total employment base, holding steady with respect to the industry share before the pandemic.

The supply chain, including small- and mid-sized businesses, drives the majority — nearly 58% — of industry employment. 57% of employment comes from the commercial aerospace sector, while defense and national security employment makes up the remaining 4%. These jobs are highly skilled and good-paying, with an average salary of \$108,900, about 55% above the national average.

The industry’s global leadership of aircraft and aerospace products also surged in 2022. Last year, the American A&D industry generated over \$952 billion in total sales — up 6.7% over 2021 levels. Of this, \$537 billion was generated through direct industry output and \$415 billion was generated through indirect output, demonstrating the value of the domestic A&D supply chain. In total, the industry generated \$418 billion in economic value, or 1.65% of total nominal GDP for the United States. This level is up nearly 7% above 2021. ”

AIA-AEROSPACE.ORG/NEWS/2023-FACTS-AND-FIGURES-DATA/

The aerospace and aviation industry has made significant advancements, mainly focusing on technological innovations, environmental considerations, space exploration, urban air mobility, data and connectivity, safety enhancements, and regulatory standards. These developments have transformed travel, exploration, and global connectivity, paving the way for a more efficient and sustainable future.

Regulatory and Safety Standards

Global Standards: Evolving regulatory frameworks address new technologies and ensure safety within the aerospace and aviation industry. Organizations such as the [International Civil Aviation Organization](#) (ICAO) and the [Federal Aviation Administration](#) (FAA) are instrumental in setting and enforcing these standards.

The aerospace and aviation industry has undergone significant advancements that enhance efficiency, sustainability, and safety. These developments not only improve current technologies but also pave the way for future innovations and transformative changes in travel and space exploration.

The commercial aerospace sector is advancing rapidly across several dimensions, driven by technological innovation, changing market dynamics, and evolving passenger expectations. Key areas of advancement in commercial aviation include:

Advancements in Commercial Aerospace: There have been a number of recent advancements in the commercial aerospace sector, focusing on technological innovations, operational efficiency, passenger experience, sustainability, and market trends. These developments reflect the industry's efforts to enhance performance, reduce costs, and meet the evolving demands of the global aviation market.

Technological Innovations

- **Aircraft Design and Materials:** Recent advancements in aircraft design have incorporated advanced materials such as composite fibers, which reduce weight and improve fuel efficiency. Innovations in aerodynamics, including the development of winglets, have further enhanced aircraft performance and fuel economy.
- **Propulsion Systems:** The aerospace industry has made significant progress in propulsion technology, with newer jet engines offering greater efficiency and lower emissions. Additionally, the development of electric and hybrid propulsion systems is advancing the sector towards greener aviation solutions.
- **Avionics:** Modern avionics systems have seen substantial improvements in navigation, communication, and automation. These advancements contribute to enhanced safety and operational efficiency, including more sophisticated autopilot systems.

Environmental Considerations

- **Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAFs):** The industry is increasingly focusing on sustainable aviation fuels to reduce carbon emissions. SAFs, produced from diverse feedstocks, are a critical component of strategies aimed at achieving net-zero emissions in aviation.
- **Noise Reduction:** Technological innovations and new design approaches have targeted noise reduction, addressing the environmental impact of aircraft operations near urban areas and airports.

Space Exploration

- **Reusable Rockets:** The development of reusable rocket technology by companies such as SpaceX and Blue Origin has significantly decreased the cost of space access and increased launch frequency, marking a pivotal shift in space exploration economics.
- **Mars Exploration:** NASA's Perseverance rover and the Artemis program represent major milestones in deep space exploration, with ongoing missions aimed at Mars exploration and plans to return humans to the Moon.

Urban Air Mobility (UAM)

- **Electric Vertical Takeoff and Landing (eVTOL) Aircraft:** The development of eVTOL aircraft promises to revolutionize urban transportation, providing quieter and more environmentally friendly commuting options within cities.
- **Air Taxis:** Prototype and pilot programs for air taxis are underway, potentially alleviating traffic congestion in densely populated urban areas and transforming urban mobility.

Data and Connectivity

- **In-Flight Connectivity:** Advancements in satellite technology and in-flight Wi-Fi services have greatly improved connectivity for passengers and crew, enhancing the overall flight experience.
- **Data Analytics:** The use of big data and artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly prevalent in the industry, optimizing predictive maintenance, flight safety, and air traffic management.

Safety Enhancements

- **Advanced Simulation and Training:** Sophisticated flight simulators and training programs have been developed to enhance pilot and maintenance crew skills, contributing to improved safety and operational efficiency.
- **Collision Avoidance Systems:** Modern aircraft are equipped with advanced collision avoidance systems and real-time weather updates, which enhance situational awareness and prevent potential accidents.

In the global aerospace sector, leading investors have collectively committed nearly \$4.7 billion across more than 35 companies. This substantial investment underscores the industry's strategic importance and the strong investor confidence in its growth potential.

Key investors include:

- **Alibaba Group:** Invested \$700 million in 4 companies, reflecting its significant commitment to the sector's expansion.
- **Stellantis:** Allocated \$650 million to a single company, demonstrating a focused investment strategy.
- **Oaktree Capital Management:** Distributed \$650 million across 4 companies, indicating a diversified investment approach.
- **European Investment Bank:** Contributed \$595 million to 6 companies, supporting a range of aerospace initiatives.

- **Warburg Pincus:** Invested \$575 million across 9 companies, showcasing a broad and impactful investment strategy.
- **Industrial and Commercial Bank of China:** Focused \$575 million on one company, signaling a high-value, strategic investment.
- **Insight Partners:** Allocated \$490 million to 6 companies, balancing its portfolio across multiple aerospace ventures.
- **Fidelity Management and Research Company:** Invested \$470 million in 4 companies, reinforcing its support for the sector's development.

These investments are crucial in advancing aerospace technology, including sustainable aviation fuels, satellite advancements, and the emerging field of commercial space travel. They also contribute to job creation and technological progress in related industries.

Top 5 Innovative Aerospace Startups according to StartUS Insights:

The following five startups have been selected based on their innovative trends, relevance, founding year, and funding status. These startups represent cutting-edge advancements in aerospace and are shaping the future of the industry. For tailored insights into promising startups, emerging trends, or industry-specific data, consider booking a demo.

1. Solideon Berkeley - Advances Aerospace Analytics

- **Location:** US
- **Innovation:** Solideon develops additive manufacturing systems to shorten aerospace production cycles. Utilizing AI and machine learning, its Aperture technology integrates robotics, advanced analytics, and materials processing to enhance production efficiency, reduce waste, and accelerate the design-to-launch process for sustainable space missions.

2. Spark e-Fuels - Produces Sustainable Aviation Fuel

- **Location:** Germany
- **Innovation:** Spark e-Fuels is pioneering SAF production using renewable energy sources such as solar and wind. Its technology enables on-site SAF production, minimizing competition for renewable resources and advancing the goal of net-zero aviation by replacing conventional carbon emissions with renewable fuels.

3. EDGE - Builds Air Defense Systems

- **Location:** UAE
- **Innovation:** EDGE offers the SkyKnight air defense system, designed for rapid deployment against a range of aerial threats including rockets and mortars. The

system is versatile for mobile and inner-layer defense, providing critical security for areas vulnerable to aerial attacks.

4. **Hadrian - Facilitates Rapid Precision Machining**

- **Location:** US
- **Innovation:** Hadrian Automation specializes in producing precision components for aerospace and defense with high speed and efficiency. Its automated manufacturing facilities enhance production timelines and offer real-time visibility, supporting timely delivery and quality assurance in the aerospace sector.

5. **Shift5 - Enables Predictive Maintenance for Aerospace Companies**

- **Location:** US
- **Innovation:** Shift5 provides a Predictive Maintenance Module that leverages vehicle data to enhance maintenance programs across commercial rail, airlines, and defense sectors. The module facilitates proactive decision-making, resource optimization, and addresses potential issues to improve safety and performance.

These startups are at the forefront of aerospace innovation, driving advancements in analytics, sustainable fuels, defense systems, manufacturing precision, and maintenance technologies.

HCPHC Recommendations

An assessment of Hancock County's and regional economic development assets, infrastructure, and industries reveals notable progress since VisionFirst Advisor's initial evaluation. Feedback from stakeholders has been positive, highlighting significant advancements in workforce development. **To sustain and build on this momentum, the strategic actions on the following pages are recommended.**



01 Provide Leadership to Address Recurring Challenges

- **Formation of an Industry Steering Committee:** Establish a Steering Committee composed of representatives from existing industries, PRCC workforce training, AccelerateMS, Stennis Space Center, and the Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission (HCPHC). This committee will serve as a collaborative forum to openly identify and address systemic challenges faced by industries in the county. Key focus areas may include employee turnover, the development of customized training programs, and the recruitment of engineers and other professionals, based on insights gathered from stakeholder interviews
- **Enhancing Contracting Processes with NASA:** Collaborate with NASA’s new Business Development Officer to create a streamlined and industry-friendly contracting process. Address the ongoing challenge of high costs for doing business within Stennis Space Center, which impacts both existing industries and recruitment efforts. Explore opportunities to negotiate reduced fees or provide temporary incentives for new tenants as a means to encourage companies to establish operations within the Center.

02 Establish Infrastructure and Assets to Support Continued Growth

- **Advancing the Technology Park Development:** Continue advancing the development of the Technology Park to create a multi-faceted environment that meets diverse industry needs. This park will offer valuable opportunities for companies seeking facilities adjacent to the airport, as well as for those looking to leverage the capabilities of Stennis Space Center while establishing manufacturing operations outside the center. By providing a hybrid solution, we can offer a cost-effective approach for projects that require the specialized security and resources of the Space Center for certain activities, but not for all aspects of their operations.
- **Explore Hangar Options for Development:** Consider expanding hangar space at the airport. This would increase the opportunities for aerospace industries within the county. The size of airport hangars can vary significantly depending on their intended use and the type of aircraft they are designed to accommodate. When attracting new industries, particularly in the aviation, aerospace, or UAS (Unmanned Aerial Systems) sectors, it’s important to consider the following typical sizes and their suitability for different types of operations:

Small Aircraft Hangars

- **Size:** Approximately 40 to 60 feet wide by 40 to 60 feet deep (12 to 18 meters wide by 12 to 18 meters deep).

- **Suitable For:** Smaller general aviation aircraft, private jets, and light aircraft. These hangars are often used by private owners or small aviation companies.

Medium-Sized Aircraft Hangars

- **Size:** Around 80 to 100 feet wide by 80 to 100 feet deep (24 to 30 meters wide by 24 to 30 meters deep).
- **Suitable For:** Regional aircraft, business jets, and light commercial aircraft. These hangars are common at regional airports and are often used by companies with a moderate fleet size.

Large Aircraft Hangars

- **Size:** Typically 100 to 200 feet wide by 100 to 200 feet deep (30 to 60 meters wide by 30 to 60 meters deep).
- **Suitable For:** Larger commercial aircraft, cargo planes, and specialized aviation operations. These hangars are designed to accommodate larger aircraft and are often used by airlines or large aviation firms.

Specialized or Custom Hangars

- **Size:** Can exceed 200 feet wide by 200 feet deep (60 meters wide by 60 meters deep), depending on the requirements.
- **Suitable For:** This size is often used for maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) facilities, aerospace manufacturing, or operations involving large aircraft or multiple aircraft simultaneously.

Considerations for Attracting New Industry:

- **Flexibility:** Modular or customizable hangars that can be adapted to different sizes and functions may be more attractive to diverse industries.
- **Modern Infrastructure:** Hangars with updated amenities, such as advanced security systems, high-speed internet, and sufficient power supply, can be more appealing to tech-focused industries like UAS companies.
- **Location:** Hangars should be located in areas with easy access to runways, taxiways, and transportation networks to enhance operational efficiency.

For attracting new industries, particularly those in aviation or aerospace, hangar sizes should be tailored to the specific needs of the potential tenants. Offering a range of sizes from small to large, with flexible and modern features, can make a location more attractive to a broader range of companies

- **Explore Spec Buildings for Development:** With speed to market being a key driver for many projects, consider building a spec building to attract industry to the Tech Park. Speculative buildings, or "spec buildings," have been an effective tool for

attracting mid-tier Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) companies due to several key factors:

- **Cost Efficiency:** Spec buildings are constructed without a specific tenant in mind, allowing developers to spread out construction costs and offer competitive leasing rates. This affordability can be especially appealing to mid-tier UAS companies that may not have the capital for custom-built facilities.
- **Ready-to-Move-In Spaces:** These buildings are often designed with flexible layouts and modern infrastructure, making them immediately usable. For UAS companies, this means they can quickly set up operations without the time and expense of customizing a space.
- **Location:** Developers of spec buildings often choose strategic locations that offer access to key markets, robust transportation networks, and strong talent pools. This can be particularly attractive to UAS companies looking to establish a presence in regions with a strong tech ecosystem or proximity to defense and aerospace hubs as well as protected airspace for testing.
- **Modern Amenities:** Spec buildings are typically designed with contemporary amenities, such as high-speed internet, advanced security features, and ample space for research and development. These features align well with the needs of UAS companies, which require sophisticated infrastructure for testing and operations.
- **Flexibility:** The modular nature of spec buildings allows for easy adaptation to different uses. Mid-tier UAS companies can benefit from this flexibility, whether they need office space, laboratories, storage for their drones and related equipment, or space for potential future expansions.
- **Reduced Risk:** For UAS companies, renting a spec building reduces the risk and financial burden of committing to a long-term lease or custom construction. This is particularly beneficial for mid-tier companies that may still be scaling their operations and prefer a lower-risk, lower-commitment option that limits initial capital outlay.
- **Business Ecosystem:** Spec buildings are often part of larger business parks or innovation hubs that foster collaboration and networking opportunities. Being part of such ecosystems can provide UAS companies with valuable connections and potential partnerships within the industry.

Overall, the combination of cost efficiency, flexibility, and modern amenities makes spec buildings an attractive option for mid-tier UAS companies looking to grow their

operations without the substantial upfront investment typically required for custom-built facilities.

“Build It and They Will Come” Examples: Communities and regions have successfully used spec buildings to attract UAS and other technology companies.

- **The Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport (PMGA) Area, Arizona:** This area has seen significant growth in UAS companies due to its dedicated innovation hub and spec buildings tailored to aerospace and defense technologies. The Gateway Airport area offers modern facilities and infrastructure that appeal to tech companies. Recently established or expanded operations include:
 1. **Honeywell** - Expanded its operations in the area, focusing on aerospace technologies.
 2. **L3Harris Technologies** - Set up facilities to enhance its defense and communication systems.
 3. **Vector Space Systems** - Established a site for its small satellite launch operations.
 4. **Boeing** - Continued to expand its presence with new initiatives in aerospace development.

- **The Aerospace Valley, California:** Located in the northern part of Los Angeles County and southern Kern County, this region has focused on developing spec buildings to attract aerospace and UAS companies. The area's strong aerospace history and proximity to key defense contractors make it a prime location. The region has seen several aerospace companies establish or expand operations recently:
 1. **Northrop Grumman** - Expanded its facilities, focusing on advanced aerospace systems and technologies.
 2. **Virgin Galactic** - Continued developing its spaceflight operations, including test flights from the area.
 3. **Aerojet Rocketdyne** - Increased its presence, focusing on propulsion and defense systems.
 4. **SpaceX** - Continued expansion of its operations related to rocket development and testing.

- **Cincinnati's Tri-County Economic Development Area (3CEDA), Ohio:** The Tri-County area has developed spec buildings aimed at attracting high-tech and advanced manufacturing companies, including those in the UAS sector. The

region benefits from a strategic location and supportive infrastructure. Recently established or expanded operations include:

1. **GE Aviation** - Enhanced its manufacturing capabilities in aerospace technologies and advanced materials.
 2. **Mitsubishi Electric** - Opened facilities focusing on automation and advanced manufacturing solutions.
 3. **Skyworks Solutions** - Established operations in semiconductor manufacturing, which supports various high-tech applications.
 4. **Ascendance Flight Technologies** - Involved in UAS development, focusing on innovative aerial vehicles.
- **The Central Texas Technology Corridor:** Stretching from Austin to San Antonio, this region has used spec buildings to support a growing tech industry, including UAS firms. The area's robust technology ecosystem and access to a skilled workforce have been key factors in its success. Recently established or expanded operations include:
1. **Tesla** - Opened a new facility focused on electric vehicle production, which involves advanced manufacturing technologies.
 2. **Wing (Alphabet)** - Launched drone delivery services, expanding its UAS operations in the region.
 3. **AeroVironment** - Increased its presence in UAS technologies, focusing on drone systems for various applications.
 4. **Xplore Technologies** - A manufacturer of rugged tablets and mobile computing solutions, serving industries including defense and logistics.
- **The National Harbor Area, Maryland:** Located near Washington, D.C., this area has leveraged spec buildings to attract companies involved in defense and UAS technology. The proximity to federal agencies and government contractors adds significant value to the location. Recently established or expanded defense and UAS technology companies include:
1. **Northrop Grumman** - Expanded its presence in defense systems and technologies, including advanced UAS platforms.
 2. **Raytheon Technologies** - Established offices focusing on missile systems and integrated defense solutions.
 3. **Insitu** (a subsidiary of Boeing) - Engaged in UAS development, enhancing its operational capabilities in the region.

4. **General Atomics** - Focused on unmanned aerial systems and advanced defense technologies, contributing to the local tech landscape.
- **The Smart Region Initiative in the Kansas City Area:** Kansas City has utilized spec buildings to attract tech companies, including those in the UAS sector, as part of its broader smart city and innovation efforts. The area's investment in tech infrastructure and connectivity has been a draw for businesses. Recently established or expanded operations include:
 1. **Cerner Corporation** - A leader in health information technology, Cerner has expanded its presence, contributing to smart health initiatives.
 2. **Honeywell** - Established operations focused on advanced technologies and UAS applications, enhancing local capabilities.
 3. **DroneUp** - A UAS service provider that focuses on drone delivery and logistics, contributing to the region's tech landscape.
 4. **Lumen Technologies** - Invested in infrastructure to support digital and smart city initiatives.
 5. **Ford Motor Company** - Opened a facility for research and development in smart mobility solutions.
 - **The Research Triangle Park (RTP), North Carolina:** RTP is known for its focus on technology and research. Spec buildings within this park have been instrumental in attracting UAS companies, thanks to the area's strong research institutions and supportive business environment. Recently established or expanded operations include:
 1. **PrecisionHawk** - Focuses on drone-based data collection and analytics for various industries, including agriculture and construction.
 2. **DroneUp** - Expanded its operations to enhance its drone delivery and logistics capabilities in the region.
 3. **Skyward** (a Verizon company) - Developed its UAS operations in RTP, specializing in drone management software and services.
 4. **Hawkeye 360** - Established a presence in RTP to focus on satellite and aerial data analytics for various applications, including defense.

These communities have recognized the value of spec buildings in fostering innovation and attracting UAS companies by providing modern, flexible, and cost-effective spaces that align with the needs of technology firms.

Adding and upgrading infrastructure is expensive. As well as the state programs that HCPHC has been pursuing, consider other grant and/or loan opportunities to help fund the necessary infrastructure and facilities necessary to move to the next level. Programs to consider:

- USDA Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program in Mississippi could be utilized to fund airport hangars.
- US Economic Development Administration can provide grants to assist with projects that promote economic development. Funding could be used to develop a speculative building, incubation space, or other facilities that lead to job creation and growth.
- Mississippi Capital Access Program through the Mississippi Development Authority provides low interest loans to finance publicly owned facilities and infrastructure necessary for projects in the state.

03 Help Address Workforce Challenges and Perceptions

- **Recruitment of Entry-Level Engineers:** Recruitment of entry-level engineers has been a recognized challenge across various industries. Establishing strategic partnerships with the engineering programs at [MSU's Gulf Coast Campus](#), by acting as a liaison with these programs, can effectively communicate the exciting career opportunities available in Hancock County to prospective graduates.

Outreach efforts should specifically target incoming sophomores and juniors, as these students are more likely to be exploring their career options and may not yet have secured job placements. Engaging with these students early in their academic careers will increase their awareness of the opportunities in our region and potentially lead to successful recruitment.

Finally, efforts should include working with Hancock County's K-12 career pathways to build multiple options for students considering careers in the aviation and aerospace industry.

By focusing on this proactive engagement strategy, HCPHC and Hancock County can build a strong pipeline of talented engineers who are informed about and interested in the opportunities available in Hancock County.

- **Customized Training Solutions:** Collaborate with Pearl River Community College (PRCC) to develop a process and allocate space for delivering tailored training programs designed to meet the specific needs of new and existing industries. While the new training center at PRCC is a valuable asset, current space constraints limit its use to established programs only.

By working together to identify and create dedicated space for customized training, HCPHC, working with our partners, can enhance our ability to support industry-specific skill development and workforce readiness. This initiative will help attract new businesses and better serve the evolving needs of current industry partners.

- **Alignment of Workforce Training Programs:** Collaborate with the steering committee to conduct regular evaluations of existing workforce training programs to that ensure they align with current industry needs. Given the rapid evolution of technology and skill requirements, it is essential to continuously assess and update training programs to keep them relevant and effective. This proactive approach will help ensure that the area’s workforce remains skilled and adaptable to meet the demands of the industry.
- **Marketing Workforce Strengths:** Develop a targeted marketing strategy to effectively showcase the depth and capabilities of the existing and future workforce. Address and counteract common misconceptions about workforce challenges, as many perceived issues are often more about perception than reality. By highlighting workforce strengths and capabilities, Hancock County can better position the area to attract new opportunities and address any negative perceptions.