

## NEWS

# 'Project Titan' takes off as \$210 million ST Engineering complex finally under construction

**Jim Little** Pensacola News Journal

Published 2:38 p.m. CT Jul. 1, 2021 | Updated 2:47 p.m. CT Jul. 1, 2021

As construction crews were busy clearing the site for ST Engineering's second hangar at Pensacola International Airport on Thursday morning, local officials, dignitaries and ST Engineering executives gathered in front of the first hangar to mark the beginning of the construction of Project Titan.

The \$210 million project will bring three additional hangars for ST Engineering's aircraft maintenance, repair and overhaul facility in Pensacola. The project also will add administrative office space to two of the new hangars.

The project was expected to begin last year but faced a nearly year-long delay because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Jeffery Lam, president of commercial aerospace at ST Engineering, told the crowd of about 50 people Thursday that when the buildings are complete in 2024, they will make up ST Engineering's largest facility and will be able to service 500 aircraft a year.

"The plan to build new hangars in Pensacola now is also a statement in the face of adversity, that we will rise above the ashes of COVID-19 to confront our future with hope and commitment," Lam said. "It is a statement of the resilience and determination of the city of Pensacola and the state of Florida."

The project will add 1,325 jobs to ST Engineering's campus on top of the 400 jobs that are part of the first hangar that opened in 2018.

**COVID delay:** Pensacola's 2nd ST Engineering hangar to be complete by September 2022

**Price increase:** Pensacola approves 2nd ST Engineering hangar for construction at \$6 million higher price

**Instant jobs:** ST Engineering offers jobs to entire George Stone Technical College aircraft maintenance class

Pensacola Mayor Grover Robinson worked during his first year in office to source funding for the project that was started by former Mayor Ashton Hayward.

Robinson said the project was possible because of the collaboration of local, state and federal leaders who supported the plans to bring new jobs to Pensacola.

Robinson added that the new jobs the project would bring aren't just statistics, but people whose lives will be changed.

"They will also have the opportunity to gain workforce education to transform their lot in life from where they are to where they can be," Robinson said. "And the sky is literally the limit because we will be working on aircraft here."

Escambia County Commissioner Jeff Bergosh said the project goes beyond just the new jobs at the hangars because the project also will spur indirect jobs and new opportunities.

"I spent 10 years on the school board seeing hundreds and hundreds of students graduating, only to see so many of them — too many of them — leave this community for better opportunities. Good for them, bad for us. That brain drain, we have to find a way to stop it. This is part of the solution for that. Great education aligned with great employers equals a better community."

Funding for the project is coming from several sources including the city, county, state and federal governments. The project received \$66 million from Triumph Gulf Coast, the board's largest grant awarded to date.

Triumph Gulf Coast board member Lewis Bear Jr. quipped that Triumph was a "small part" of the overall funding of the project.

Sen. Doug Broxson, who helped push through the creation of Triumph Gulf Coast to use a \$1.5 billion settlement from BP over the 2010 oil spill for economic development, said projects like Project Titan were the whole reason Triumph was created.

ST Engineer also is contributing \$35 million to the project, but the city will retain ownership of the facility, with ST Engineering paying an annual lease once the building is complete.

Lam said ST Engineering has received a warm welcome from the Pensacola community.

"When our first hangar became operational three years ago, we have been so truly impressed by the support that we wish to do even more," Lam said.

Lam said ST Engineering will be expanding a scholarship program for local students to receive aircraft maintenance certifications, as well as working as partners to help set up a Pensacola-based aviation training academy that will train new workers and provide additional training to existing workers to further their own careers.

"I'm sure that these hangars for which we are laying the foundation today will further advance our shared goals," Lam said. "I wish you a safe, swift and successful building program in the coming years."

*Jim Little can be reached at [jwlittle@pnj.com](mailto:jwlittle@pnj.com) and [850-208-9827](tel:850-208-9827).*