Triumph Agrees to Support $64.5M for MRO Construction in Northwest Florida

DeFuniak Springs, FL - Triumph Gulf Coast today gave preliminary approval to $64.5 million in grants to expand the region’s aerospace and aviation infrastructure. The Triumph board voted unanimously to support $56 million in major expansions of the Pensacola International Airport’s maintenance, repair and overhaul facilities and $8.5 million for substantial expansion of Whiting Aviation Park in Santa Rosa County.

“These transformative investments will directly create over 3,100 high-paying jobs, generate hundreds more jobs in support and supply areas and grow Northwest Florida as a leader in aviation and aerospace,” said Triumph Chairman Don Gaetz.

The Triumph grant to Pensacola’s aviation authority is contingent upon obtaining more than $75 million now being sought from city, county, state and federal sources and $59 million in commitments to the project by private companies. Triumph’s funds will be paid over a period of years with each payment dependent upon jobs created and sustained.

The next step for the Pensacola and Whiting projects is agreement on a term sheet that will stipulate the obligations of all funding partners and include performance requirements and a “claw back” that would allow Triumph to reclaim its funds if jobs aren’t created and sustained, as committed by the private and public sponsors of the proposals.

Today the Triumph board also acted to approve term sheets and contracts for projects in Okaloosa, Wakulla and Bay counties.

Escambia

Triumph’s $56M grant follows the recent opening of the first new MRO (maintenance, repair, overhaul) hangar at the Pensacola International Airport. At full buildout the MRO Aviation Campus’s four MRO hangers, administrative building, warehouse and shop space will house over 1,725 new jobs and cost $334,825,000.00. According to information presented to the Triumph board, jobs created by the project will pay an average $44,461, plus benefits, per employee. Triumph will contribute 17% percent of the total project cost.

Current project funding partners include the City of Pensacola, Escambia County, the State of Florida/Florida Department of Transportation, Florida Job Growth Grant Fund, VT Mobile Aerospace Engineering, and the Industry Recruitment, Retention and Expansion Fund. Local economic development agencies, educational institutions, and tenant companies will work
together to implement training programs to create a sustainable workforce. Job functions at the MRO Campus are expected to include Master Airplane Technicians, Aircraft Inspectors, Master Structures Technicians, Sheet Metal Mechanics, and Avionics Technicians.

**Santa Rosa**

The Triumph Board’s $8.5M support of site development at Whiting Aviation Park is expected to create over 200 high paying jobs. This project is built on the investment Santa Rosa County made to purchase 267-acres adjacent to NAS Whiting Field and a unique MOU with The Department of the Navy for “through the fence” accesses for private companies. The total project cost is $17,704,975 with Triumph contributing 48% of those costs.

Development of Whiting Aviation Park strengthens the region’s aviation cluster with the Pensacola Airport to the east and the Crestview Bob Sikes Airport in Okaloosa County to the west. It enhances the region’s growing aviation industry by providing additional industrial space adjacent to an existing airfield. And it supports the regional strategic initiative of expanding the aerospace and defense industry cluster, an industry with a strong outlook for growth.

These targeted investments in the aviation and aerospace cluster are expected to drive supply chain companies to co-locate in the region. Florida is currently #2 in the nation for aviation and aerospace establishments and added more than any other state in the southeastern U.S in 2017.

**Bay**

The Triumph Board also agreed to move to final agreement negotiations with the Tom P. Haney Technical Center in Bay County to modernize its 40 year old HVAC training program. The program includes a pilot program requiring Haney to offer skills upgrade training to graduates using the new equipment and certification programs. The grant request is for $615,000.

**Wakulla**

Triumph voted to approve its first education agreement for $4,301,867.00 with Wakulla County School Board. The Wakulla School Board project is expected to result in more than 400 students earning national industry certifications in information technology, HVAC and automotive maintenance in the first five years of the program. The proposed project brings training to the elementary and middle schools that will prepare students for advanced training at the high school levels. The HVAC and automotive training will create well-paying jobs in business areas with high needs for skilled labor.

**Okaloosa**

The $1.5 million grant with Okaloosa County, approved at the Board meeting, will extend water and sewer to the Shoal River Ranch area. Economic Development officials believe the region will be able to attract major employers the premier Shoal River mega-site east of Crestview along Interstate 10. The site improvements are expected to attract more than 500 high-wage net new jobs within five years of site work completion.
Under the terms of Florida’s settlement with BP, the energy company has already deposited $300 million in Triumph Gulf Coast. Further payments of approximately $80 million a year will be made from 2019 through 2033, amounting to a total of $1.5 billion. Applications have been received and are under consideration to benefit all eight disproportionately affected counties in the Triumph Region.

Triumph Gulf Coast’s board of directors is appointed by the Governor, Chief Financial Officer, Attorney General and presiding officers of the Legislature. The appointees to the Triumph Board are Allan Bense, Stan Connally, Jr, Dr. Pam Dana, Chair Don Gaetz, Ben Lee, and Stephen Riggs, IV and Jason Shoaf. All meetings of the board are public.

More information about Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. is available at www.myfloridatriumph.com.

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