



GULF COAST AEROSPACE CORRIDOR

Louisiana

Mississippi

Alabama

Florida

2011-2012

Gulf Coast
Reporters' League

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Gulf Coast Reporters' League

Researched, written and prepared by the Gulf Coast Reporters' League, an independent team of journalists from the Gulf Coast. Support for this project was provided by the Aerospace Alliance, the Gulf Coast Regional Chamber Coalition and Mississippi Enterprise for Technology. Findings detailed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect views of the organizations or agencies that provided support.

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Version 2

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Acknowledgments

This book was inspired in part by an ongoing program of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Alliance for Economic Development. Since 2006 the multi-county group has produced an annual reference book about aerospace activities in South Mississippi, a daily Gulf Coast aerospace news digest and quarterly science and technology newsletter. That body of work helped spark the idea for a book about the broader aerospace region.

Equally important was the willingness of editors at the *Mobile Press-Register* and *Northwest Florida Daily News* to let a reporter participate in this project. Other newspaper and broadcast editors took the time to review chapters with fresh, critical eyes.

Finally, we thank the underwriters - The Aerospace Alliance, Gulf Coast Regional Chamber Coalition and Mississippi Enterprise for Technology - who were approached as the book neared completion, and believed in the value of the work.

About us

Despite the quality newspapers and television stations in this region, none is in a position to tell a story about the broader region's aerospace activities. Each, understandably, is focused on providing local news to a local audience. But several reporters, current and former, knew there was a story to be told about the region's aerospace activities. The *Gulf Coast Reporters' League* was formed to tackle the project.

Methodology

Members of the *Gulf Coast Reporters' League* approached the topic in typical newsroom fashion. They brainstormed about the stories that should be pursued and made adjustments along the way. Some ideas were dropped, others were added.

The team critiqued each other's work, then went to newspaper editors and reporters not tied to the project to provide reviews. Underwriters were approached near the end of the project and had no part in story selection or the finished product. Findings are those of the authors.

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A wealth of choices

Part I: Foreign investments

The good foreign occupation

China is just the latest foreign country to invest in the Gulf Coast aerospace corridor, and it's unlikely to be the last to get a foothold



Part II: Space activities

Long delayed vision takes off

With NASA pushing much of the space flight effort to commercial companies, the development of tech parks bodes well for the region



Part III: RDT&E/applied technology

More bang for the buck

The region's big dog for aerospace research is Eglin Air Force Base, but across the region there are other federal and state research operations



Part IV: Unmanned systems/robotics

Robots: The future is now

Thousands of robots will be flying in the future, with many more on land, sea and space, and this region has a foot in the door of the growing field



Part V: Military aviation

Gulf Coast's military might

The region has large concentrations of military bases, with many focused on aviation-related activities ranging from training to aerial weapons



Part VI: Education/workforce

Taking care of business

A combination of colleges, vo-tech schools and job training programs are designed to meet the needs of new and established businesses alike

