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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham
Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes
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Aviation company announces major expansion to NM *Ascent Aviation set to bring 360 jobs to Roswell Air Center*



Photo courtesy of Ascent Aviation Services

ROSWELL, N.M. – Arizona-based Ascent Aviation Services is planning to expand to the Roswell Air Center and hire 360 employees in New Mexico for airplane repair and maintenance services, Economic Development Department Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes announced today.

Ascent Aviation Services has signed a letter of intent to commence operations at the Roswell Air Center. The firm is set to hire 130 employees in the first year, for a total of 360 over the next five years. Workers are expected to earn an average salary of \$54,000 a year.

The State of New Mexico, through its Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) job creation fund, administered by the Economic Development Department, has pledged up to \$4 million to support the project, while Chaves County has committed an additional \$3 million in utility and infrastructure improvements. Ascent plans to invest \$18 million into the New Mexico location. The project is expected to have a statewide economic impact of \$545 million over 10 years.

"With its clear blue skies and competitive business climate, New Mexico continues to

attract top-tier aerospace companies," Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham said. "The Roswell Air Center is a unique economic driver that will, with the support of my administration, continue to bring high-quality and high-paying jobs to the area, and I am glad to welcome Ascent Aviation to the state."

"The Roswell Air Center has been a tremendous asset in Chaves County," Cabinet Secretary Keyes said. "The state is fortunate to have LEDA and other incentives that can help Ascent and other companies expand or relocate in New Mexico and bring higher paying jobs to rural communities."

Ascent is a one-stop shop for aircraft maintenance including storage, maintenance, reclamation, and fueling. It services narrow, wide-body, and regional aircraft, and has authorizations on Boeing, Bombardier, Embraer, and Airbus aircraft. It also services airlines, cargo operators, leasing companies, and VIPs.

Ascent has two facilities in Arizona with approximately 500 employees. Its locations at the Pinal Air Park and Tucson International Airport span 1,230 acres and five hangars.

As a former strategic bomber base for the U.S. Air Force that closed in 1967, the Roswell Air Center is already used by airlines and leasing companies for storage of unused jets and private planes. The facility has a 13,000-foot long runway and is suitable for larger, heavier wide-body planes. The 500 planes parked in Roswell often need maintenance, paint, or repairs, and they sometimes have to fly elsewhere for those services.

David T. Querio, Ascent Aviation Services President, sees the move to New Mexico as a great expansion opportunity. Ascent, along with the current aircraft support businesses, will make the Roswell Air Center a full-service operations center for maintenance, repair and overhaul.

"The Roswell Airport is an incredible facility with a large volume of aircraft already parked there as a result of COVID-19 and other factors limiting operations. Sometimes those planes have limited options for heavy maintenance and service and have to be ferried out. This facility will provide an option to keep those jobs and revenue in New Mexico," Querio said.



Click video image above to view full interview with David Querio, President, Ascent Aviation

Ascent's leased space will cover 10 acres and the company plans to construct a maintenance hangar large enough for wide-body jets. The state and local investment in the project makes it possible to move forward sooner and with more certainty.

"The state and county incentives show that New Mexico has a strong desire to bring in new businesses and create good jobs. There can be a lot of pain associated with this type of expansion and everyone from Cabinet Secretary Keyes and Economic Division Director Mark Roper on down, including additional personnel from the State of New Mexico, Chaves County, and the City of Roswell, have all shown a desire to help. That has made this expansion possible," Querio said.

Roswell rancher Tim Jennings, a former state senator who has been an advocate for the air

center, said the project will jump start utility extensions in the public corridors adjacent to the land – and that investment will attract even more businesses and new jobs.

“Everyone has worked together and this project is a win-win for the community. Roswell is very affordable, and there is a big market for this work in the airline industry,” Jennings said. He added that many of the students who earn a degree in air-frame mechanics at the ENMU-Roswell Branch Campus and moved to Dallas where they service big jets “will now be able to come back home.”

Chaves County Commission Chair Will Cavin said, "Chaves County heartily welcomes the Ascent Aviation team. It is our privilege to facilitate this new partnership with them and the State of New Mexico that was made possible by the Roswell-Chaves County Economic Development Corporation, former State Senator Tim Jennings, and the City of Roswell. "

"The City of Roswell is excited about the new large hangar project with Ascent Aviation," Mayor Dennis Kintigh added. "Roswell has emerged as a significant player in the worldwide aviation Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) industry. The Ascent hangar will substantially expand the capabilities and options here in Roswell. Together, with our existing facilities and other planned enhancements, we aim to be the worldwide leader in aviation MRO operations."

"We are excited to welcome Ascent Aviation’s expansion of their operations to Roswell-Chaves County. The many jobs they will create in the growing aviation MRO industry here underscores our vision of future growth for aviation industries at the Roswell Air Center," Mike Espiritu, President of the Roswell-Chaves County Economic Development Corp., said. "We appreciate the high-tech job opportunities, capital investment, and partnerships with Ascent and our community and pledge our full support to their success."

Ascent also plans to offer scholarship and internship opportunities for students studying aircraft maintenance at Eastern New Mexico University in Roswell and Central New Mexico Community College in Albuquerque.

“Wherever possible we are looking to provide training and assistance so we can grow our own mechanics. We know the importance of bringing something of this magnitude to Roswell,” Querio said.

Ascent Aviation Services is based at Pinal Air Park in Marana, AZ, and is sister companies with Ascent Aviation Services, LLC located at Tucson International Airport.

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Photos courtesy of Ascent Aviation Services

The New Mexico Economic Development Department's mission is to improve the lives of New Mexico families by increasing economic opportunities and providing a place for businesses to thrive.

