



Aerospace Report

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Northeast Michigan Regional Prosperity Initiative (NEMRPI)
Aerospace Service and Research Development
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Regional Air Service Overview:

Per the Michigan Department of Transportation, there are 212 general aviation airports in the State of Michigan with 19 or 9% of those located in the Northeast Region. Each of the eleven counties in the Northeast Region contains at least one general aviation airport. There is only one Air Service Airport in the Northeast Region – Alpena, that is providing passenger service. The Northeast Region has three Licensed Flight Schools; one in Cheboygan, one in Oscoda and one in Roscommon.

In Northeast Michigan, currently only Alpena County Regional Airport, Gaylord Regional Airport and Oscoda-Wurtsmith Airport have large enough runways and facilities to support active recruitment of Aerospace projects. With advanced technology and the need to reduce labor costs, both the U.S. Department of Defense, and the Airline industries have recently focused capital investments into research and development of unmanned aerial aircraft (drones) and unmanned equipment (automated baggage, snow removal and airline taxiing) projects. Recognizing the opportunity to assist in job creation, all three airports are exploring creation of Aerospace Research and Development projects.

The following is an overview of each airport's existing activities

Alpena County Regional Airport (APN).

APN is a county-owned, public use, joint civilian-military airport located 7 miles west of the central business district of Alpena in Alpena County. APN cover 3,084 acres and has two runways – one at 9,001 x 150 feet and the other 5,028 x 100 feet. APN is home to Delta Airlines' daily passenger service from APN to Minneapolis and Detroit.

Michigan Air National Guard has a Combat Readiness Training Center (CRTC) on the grounds of APN. Since 2010 APN has served as a testing site for unmanned aerial aircraft (UAA). Unmanned aerial aircraft are still in their infancy in regard to development. APN works with Camp Grayling on a joint mission (driven by the needs of the Department of Defense) to test products, specifically unmanned aerial aircraft, with the goal of creating an opportunity to commercialize these aircraft for commercial production and use.

Oscoda-Wurtsmith Airport (OSC).

OSC is owned by the Oscoda-Wurtsmith Airport Authority and is a general aviation airport on 54 acres with two runways both are 11,800 x 200 feet. OSC is located three miles northwest of the central business district of Oscoda in Iosco County. OSC was built out of a portion of the decommissioned Wurtsmith Air Force Base which housed nuclear armed B-52 Stratofortress bombers during the Cold War. One of OSC's primary occupants is Kalitta Air which is an FAA Class 4 Repair Facility and employs over 750 people. Kalitta recently built a hangar on site to expand its aircraft servicing operations that added 150 new mechanics jobs in 2013.

Gaylord Regional Airport (GLR)

GLR is a county owned general aviation airport covering 1,572 acres with two runways – one at 6,578 x 150 feet and the other at 4,200 x 75 feet. GLR is located one mile southwest of the central business district of Gaylord in Otsego County. GLR is a general aviation facility and its current primary revenue source is providing service and fuel to general aviation flights (made over \$1 million from this in 2013), in addition to leasing hangars. GLR is exploring becoming an all-weather test facility for unmanned general aviation equipment (automated snow removal, baggage transport, and airline taxiing) development.

Strategic Plan Goals

Challenges – Aerospace Research and Development (R&D) Projects are historically supported by large academic research centers such as Michigan Tech and the University of Michigan and having the presence of academia is attractive to the Department of Defense and the Airline Industries when awarding their projects. The establishment of R&D Projects or test facilities would need to have support of academia. Michigan has 15 active SmartZones that provide distinct geographical locations where technology-based firms, entrepreneurs and researchers locate in close proximity to all of the community aspects that assist in their endeavors facilitating attracting new R&D Projects and testing. However, no active SmartZone exists in Northwest or Northeast Michigan. The closest SmartZone is in Mt. Pleasant at Central Michigan University. Without additional establishment of SmartZones in the Region it will be difficult to attract Aerospace R&D Projects and testing.

Opportunities – APN, OSC and GLR all have large runways with the ability to accommodate large commercial, military and private airplanes. In addition, the location of these airports in Northeast Michigan accommodate all season testing, often required by airlines whose airplanes and equipment are operating in varying climates throughout the world.

Based on these Opportunities and Challenges, along with discussion regarding existing services provided at these airports and current partnerships in place, the following three realistic strategies would most assist in creating jobs, reducing unemployment and poverty while growing the population through aerospace service and research development in the Region in the next five years.

(1) STRATEGY – Develop a marketing campaign focused on attracting or luring companies, funders, and developers to the Region centered on promoting the size and resources of major airports in region.

2) STRATEGY - Cultivate funding opportunities for APN, OSC and GLR to assist with investment into infrastructure development which will give the Region a competitive edge when developing and recruiting major aerospace projects.

(3) STRATEGY - Create Test Sites/Centers at each airport (APN, OSC, GLR) working with local universities to provide licensing, training, certification and education in areas such as aircraft maintenance, commercial pilot licensing, emergency services that is not accessible in Northern Michigan.