

EHT aviation park building nearing completion, employees to move in next year

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Construction of the first building of the National Aviation Research and Technology Park is in its final stages, and employees working there will begin moving in right after the new year, Atlantic County officials said.

The next step is filling the empty space with tenants.

“The core and shell will be complete in the next two weeks or so, the exterior is done, the rooftop lounge is just about done, and the reception area is coming together,” said John Lamey, director of the Atlantic County Improvement Authority. “We are also working to complete the lab for the (Federal Aviation Administration).”

The first building of the park, or NARTP, located in Egg Harbor Township, features 66,000 square feet of research space, a Federal Aviation Administration laboratory, classrooms, a large conference room — called the Thunder Room — and a rooftop lounge, among other amenities.

FAA and NARTP employees will move into the building just after the new year, Lamey said, and the county is close to securing tenants to move into the rest of the building thereafter.

The county also is finalizing a deal with the New Jersey Innovation Institute, a research corporation established by the New Jersey Institute of Technology, to move in and conduct research in the building.

A representative from NJII could not be reached for comment.

“We actually have more interest from companies than there is space in the building, which is a really good thing,” Lamey said. “There is one major company in particular that will probably take up a lot of space, and it’s a company that everyone knows.”

Lamey and Howard Kyle, a NARTP board member and chief of staff to county executive Dennis Levinson, declined to name any companies because the contracts have not officially been signed.

Once they do sign, however, they will work with the ACIA to design their space in the building the way they want. The floors are raised 18 inches so wires can easily run underneath and there is a loading dock in the back to move equipment in and out.

The ACIA owns and paid for the first building and has been actively taking prospective tenants on a tour over the last several months.

The building is the first example of what will be an entire aviation industry around the airport that will include a seven-building research technology park, an air cargo operation, and an aviation maintenance and repair academy and company.

One year ago, Atlantic County announced it is partnering with Atlantic Cape Community College to create an aviation maintenance, repair and overhaul training institute at the airport that will train students to fix planes for small and major airlines around the country.

The program and curriculum are being developed and will include an FAA certification for students.

Graduates of the maintenance academy can then theoretically work for the planned aviation maintenance and repair operation or the air cargo operation, both of which will also be at the airport.

They will also learn skills that can translate into other industries located in South Jersey, such as locomotives and amusement rides.

The county is also partnering with Cape May County and their efforts to create an aviation industry and the Cape May County Airport.

In August, Cape May County Airport received a \$3 million federal grant Tuesday to expand the region's unmanned aerial systems industry.

The grant, awarded by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration, will be used to build a 20,000-square-foot building within the airport to be used by UAS or drone businesses. Companies in the facility, located in the Rio Grande section of Middle Township, will each be provided with 5,000 square feet of space.