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Gov. Edwards and Citadel Completions Announce Louisiana Aerospace Project

May 17, 2018

Today, Gov. John Bel Edwards and Citadel Completions LLC announced the company will make a \$17.6 million capital investment and hire more than 250 people for an aircraft center dedicated to interior jet modifications and maintenance at Chennault International Airport in Lake Charles.

For the project, Citadel Completions will create 256 new direct jobs with an average annual salary of \$80,000, plus benefits. In addition, Louisiana Economic Development estimates the project will result in 347 new indirect jobs, for a total of more than 600 new jobs in Southwest Louisiana. Hiring for the project is underway, with Citadel Completions expecting to begin operations by the third quarter of 2018.

“Louisiana’s established advanced manufacturing capacity provides unparalleled advantages for aviation and aerospace companies,” Gov. Edwards said. “That’s particularly true in Southwest Louisiana, where Chennault International Airport is one of our state’s great aviation assets. Citadel Completions has recognized the value of this facility and our

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exceptional workforce, and we congratulate the company on choosing Lake Charles for their completion center, which will bring high-paying jobs and new careers in aviation to this region.”

Citadel Completions is an entity created and financed by Las Vegas entrepreneur and businessman Sheldon G. Adelson and his family. As a newly established aerospace company, Citadel will provide full-scale interior completions for luxury and commercial aircraft, such as Boeing 737, 747, 767 and 777 jets, along with Airbus A330 and A340 jets. In addition to providing jet interior modifications, Citadel Completions will perform MRO — or maintenance, repair and overhaul – services, as space is available.

“We are excited to begin operations at the Chennault International Airport in Lake Charles,” said Citadel Completions Managing Director Joe Bonita. “The infrastructure at Chennault is modern and well-suited for aircraft interior completion and MRO operations. The airport and local community have been extremely welcoming, and we look forward to working together to build a world-class business at this incredible facility.”

The company’s Lake Charles workforce will include a seasoned team of aviation professionals who design and engineer luxury interiors for a variety of narrow- and wide-body aircraft. Customers will range from private owners and VIP jet groups to government operators.

“Chennault is extremely pleased that Citadel Completions decided to make our airport and Lake Charles their new home,” said Executive Director Kevin Melton of the Chennault International Airport Authority. “During the negotiations to bring Citadel Completions to Southwest Louisiana, it became apparent that we are dealing with the leading aviation company in its sector. Chennault teamed with Louisiana Economic Development to conclude a deal that will be a win for the state, region and for Citadel Completions.”

LED began reviewing project possibilities in May 2017 and in November 2017 entered discussions with the entity that formally would become Citadel Completions LLC. To secure the project, the State of Louisiana offered the company a competitive incentive package that includes a performance-based grant of \$7 million to defray the cost of facility modifications, payable in seven consecutive yearly installments, along with a \$2 million performance-based grant for lease support. In addition, the company is expected to utilize Louisiana’s Industrial Tax Exemption and Quality Jobs programs.



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“The City of Lake Charles is tremendously proud that Chennault International Airport Authority was able to attract Citadel Completions to our region,” Lake Charles Mayor Nic Hunter said. “Citadel Completions will upgrade national and international aircraft at Chennault. The company will add more than 250 high-paying, quality jobs to the growing Southwest Louisiana economy.”

At Chennault, Citadel Completions will occupy Hangar D (with 150,000 square feet of space), Hanger H (112,000 square feet) and a separate administrative building with 19,000 square feet.

“Through the years, Chennault has been the home of thousands of aviation jobs,” said President and CEO George Swift of the Southwest Louisiana Economic Development Alliance. “We welcome Citadel Completions and look forward to working with them to further diversify our aviation sector.”

Citadel Completions is the latest in a deep inventory of aerospace assets that generate significant economic activity in Louisiana. Those assets include Northrop Grumman’s Programmed Depot Maintenance facility at Chennault International Airport; the commercial aircraft paint facility of Landlocked Aviation Services, also at Chennault; NASA’s 832-acre Michoud Assembly Facility in New Orleans; Metro Aviation’s full-service helicopter completion and maintenance facility in Shreveport; Haynes International’s titanium hydraulic tubing center, which manufactures products for the aviation industry in Arcadia; more than 15,000 jobs and \$1.1 billion in annual spending supported by Barksdale Air Force Base, also in Northwest Louisiana, and the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base in Southeast Louisiana; AvEx, a global leader in aviation exteriors, located in New Iberia; Arrow Aviation’s helicopter service facility in Broussard; England Airpark, a multi-use air transportation and business center in Alexandria; and offshore energy transportation leaders that include PHI Inc., ERA Helicopters and Bristow Group.

About Citadel Completions

Well-funded and staffed by seasoned industry professionals, Citadel Completions LLC is a newly established organization dedicated to superior aircraft interior completions, modifications of all types, and maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) activities. The company will open its initial aircraft interior completion and modification center in Lake



Charles, Louisiana, in 2018. Citadel Completions fully complies with all Federal Aviation Administration regulations, policies and procedures for aviation modifications, maintenance, repair and overhaul.

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