

Myrtle Beach International Airport

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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Myrtle Beach Aviation Company Works with the Air Force Research Laboratory Develop New Composite Test Aircraft

On June 17, 2009 Myrtle Beach-based AvCraft journeyed to Palmdale, Calif. for the official roll-out of the Advanced Composite Cargo Aircraft (ACCA).

The ACCA is a modified Dornier 328J aircraft. The fuselage aft of the crew station and the vertical tail were removed and replaced with completely new structural designs made of advanced composite materials.

The roll-out is the result of several years of planning and collaboration for AvCraft, which specializes in maintenance and repairs of the Dornier 328J aircraft, which is the aircraft that was selected for modification for the project. The first test flight was completed successfully on June 2.

“ACCA has the potential to change aircraft manufacturing as we presently know it, for the better,” commented Barth Shenk, Air Force Research Laboratory, ACCA program manager. “This is the culmination of years of teamwork between government and industry labs involving hundreds of dedicated researchers across the country to fundamentally change the way we make airframes.”

“NASA Dryden Flight Research Center and AvCraft have been linchpin partners in our program’s success” Shenk added. “NASA’s expertise in experimental flight test programs helped us streamline our test preparations and AvCraft (the Myrtle Beach, S.C. based domestic maintainer of Dornier 328J), provided critical support on the aircraft subsystems so Lockheed could focus on the structural design, fabrication and integration issues.”

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HORRY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF AIRPORTS



Mike Hill, General Manager of AvCraft states: "This was an incredibly exciting project for us that was developed in several phases. We assisted the Air Force with the selection and procurement of the aircraft. This entailed several weeks of engineers quietly working in our hangers to evaluate the 328J as to its feasibility as a candidate for the project. Once the 328J was selected, AvCraft helped locate an airframe in Europe that was procured. This aircraft was flown to Myrtle Beach where members of our team began the first steps towards the extensive modifications that would soon transform the aircraft from a commercial regional airliner to the military advanced technology demonstrator it is today. After the aircraft was flown from Myrtle Beach to Lockheed Martin's Skunk Works® in Palmdale our team was sent to Palmdale on numerous occasions to work on systems modifications. We anticipate continued contractual work with Lockheed Martin and the Air Force in supporting the project during the next year. What an incredible opportunity for us to be a part of this important military development."

Located at the Myrtle Beach International Airport, AvCraft is a full-service regional aircraft facility (of approx 140,000 sq ft) with a complete range of maintenance capabilities, including all scheduled maintenance phase checks, heavy C level inspections and repairs along with full avionics services, paint shop and interior completions center. www.avcraft.com

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