

Partnership Advances Wichita's Global Aerospace Leadership at Farnborough 2026

When the world's aerospace, defense and space leaders gathered at the 2026 Farnborough International Airshow, the Partnership was there with a clear purpose: strengthen relationships, generate investment opportunities, and showcase why the Wichita region continues to be the world's premier destination for aerospace innovation and manufacturing.

A Unified Regional Strategy

Representing the Air Capital of the World on the global stage, the Partnership joined business leaders, elected officials, higher education partners and industry representatives to elevate the region's competitive advantages while creating new opportunities for growth across aerospace, defense, advanced manufacturing and the emerging space economy.

The delegation included U.S. Senator Jerry Moran, Kansas Lieutenant Governor David Toland, Wichita Mayor Lily Wu, Sedgwick County Commissioner Jeff Blubaugh, Wichita State University leadership and executives representing companies across the region's aerospace ecosystem.

Together, the group demonstrated what sets Wichita apart: a world-class workforce, unmatched aerospace expertise, nationally recognized research capabilities, an extensive supplier network and a collaborative approach that helps companies succeed.





Air Capital of the World Reception

The kickoff to the airshow was the Air Capital of the World Reception, hosted by the Partnership with U.S. Senator Jerry Moran serving as honorary host. The reception brought together approximately 600 leaders representing nearly 150



organizations from across aerospace, defense, space, government, academia and economic development. Among the attendees:

- Approximately 75% of participating organizations were represented by a C-suite executive or equivalent senior leader.
- Approximately 20% of attendees represented government or military organizations, including senior leaders from NASA, the FAA, the Department of Defense, the U.S. Senate and U.S. Representatives.

During the reception, Senator Moran welcomed NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman, who recognized Wichita and Kansas for their contributions to the Artemis II mission and emphasized the region's continued importance to America's future in space exploration.

Turning Conversations into Opportunities

The Partnership's delegation maintained an active schedule of business development meetings throughout the week.

The team hosted 122 meetings in the Air Capital chalet, engaging with companies from more than 11 countries and nearly every major U.S. defense prime contractor. These conversations focused on business opportunities, including:

- New manufacturing investments
- Engineering and research expansions
- Supplier partnerships
- Defense and national security programs
- Space industry growth
- International market expansion



U.S. Senator Jerry Moran championed Kansas's skilled workforce and ecosystem capabilites during the Air Capital of the World's booth grand opening.



City of Wichita Mayor Lily Wu represented Wichita, Kan. with remarks at the Space Zone Theatre.

A Growing Aerospace, Defense and Space Ecosystem

One of the strongest themes throughout Farnborough was the continued diversification of Wichita's economy.

While commercial aerospace remains the foundation of the region's success, conversations increasingly focused on defense manufacturing, advanced materials, autonomous systems and space technologies.

For the first time, the Partnership participated in the show's Space Zone, reflecting the region's growing momentum in commercial and government space programs.

Across nearly every meeting, Wichita's strengths consistently stood out:

- A globally recognized aerospace workforce.
- The research and testing capabilities of Wichita State University's (WSU) National Institute for Aviation Research (NIAR).
- Workforce development through WSU and WSU Tech.
- One of the nation's deepest aerospace supply chains.
- Advanced manufacturing expertise.
- A central U.S. location supporting efficient production and logistics.


NIAR at WSU and Kelly Hills Unmanned Systems announced a landmark strategic partnership.


Envisage Group announced the acquisition of Wichita-based Precision Products Company.

Announcements

The week also featured several significant announcements that reinforced the region's continued growth. The announcements included:

- **JetZero to Open Wichita Engineering Office**
  JetZero announced it will establish a new engineering office on WSU's Innovation Campus, bringing approximately 30 engineering jobs to the region.
- **Envisage Group Acquires Precision Products Company**
  Envisage Group announced the acquisition of Wichita-based Precision Products Company, creating Envisage Manufacturing Incorporated (EMI) and expanding the company's presence in the U.S. aerospace market.
- **NIAR and Kelly Hills Unmanned Systems**
  NIAR at WSU and Kelly Hills Unmanned Systems announced a landmark strategic partnership designed to position Kansas as the nation’s leading hub for Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) operations, uncrewed aircraft system (UAS) testing, advanced aerial mobility (AAM) and autonomous flight development.
- **NIAR and Orizon Aerostructures Manufacturing Alliance**
  NIAR at WSU and Orizon Aerostructures announced a strategic alliance to accelerate aerospace and defense manufacturing through integrated engineering, research, testing and advanced production capabilities.