



PORT OF PASCO

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WA site readiness grant awarded for proposed aerospace industrial center

PASCO – A \$416,000 grant from the Washington State Department of Commerce will help the Port of Pasco launch a master planning process for the future development of 460 acres at the Tri-Cities Airport-PSC.

The Port was one of six public entities to receive funding from a pilot grant program intended to increase the number of “project-ready industrial sites” in Washington. The Port intends, over time, to develop its land at the airport into an aerospace and advanced manufacturing center.

Grant funds will make it possible for the future development of the Aerospace Innovation & Manufacturing Center to accelerate. The Port has been exploring ways to develop the land and utilize it to attract advanced manufacturing employers that will generate high-wage jobs. The Port will provide \$80,000 in local grant match. State grant funds must be spent by June 30, 2023.

“The Tri-Cities has a long history of successfully attracting an impressive roster of employers from the food processing and energy sectors. We believe the Tri-Cities Airport is the perfect location to welcome a fast-growing industry with a long legacy in Washington,” said Executive Director Randy Hayden. “Modern aerospace companies are developing impressive new technologies, designing and assembling futuristic flight vehicles for civil, commercial, and military markets. The right projects will be very successful in Pasco.”

Aerospace is rapidly evolving, including advancements in electric and hydrogen-powered aircraft, private space exploration, vertical take-off and landing vehicles, autonomous flight systems, and uncrewed aerial vehicles.

Manufacturing, supply chain, and logistics to support existing and emerging companies requires thousands of Tier 2 and Tier 3 companies. The Port believes the Tri-Cities Airport will develop a niche manufacturing center that attracts and caters to these companies.

“We are the third largest air carrier airport in the state with national and regional airlines operating here,” said Airport Director Buck Taft. “The AIM Center is an exciting opportunity to utilize the airport’s significant asset – available land immediately adjacent to the runway system. Our vision includes direct access to the flight line for these new companies to serve their corporate and air freight needs.”

The state’s pilot grant intends to spur development of industrial centers that result in the overall expansion of manufacturing in the state. In 2021 the Washington Legislature approved the Best Economic Strength Through Manufacturing (BEST) Act. The state set an ambitious goal of adding 300,000 new manufacturing jobs in 10 years.

For Pasco, the grant award will help the state and the region contribute to meeting the goal.

The Industrial Site Readiness grant is meant to fund preliminary engineering and site investigation that confirms a specific land area is ready to serve manufacturing companies. The Port intends to complete an extensive master plan. Site due diligence will include traffic impact analysis, phase 1 environmental assessment, geotechnical sampling, cultural and archaeological analysis, and a process for public engagement.

The Tri-Cities offers a high quality of life with 300 days of sunshine a year and a wide variety of outdoor activities. The region is home to more than 300,000 people. Tri-Cities is well known as the “Heart of Washington Wine Country.”

“This is a great place to live, work, and play,” said Hayden. “The aerospace industry will be welcome here. Its workforce will enjoy a top tier quality of life.”

About the Port of Pasco

The Port of Pasco is a local municipal corporation established by the voters of Franklin County in 1940. The Port works to promote economic development in the county by creating opportunities for investment and growth. Along with operating multiple commercial parks, the Port offers industrial land for sale for growing companies. The Reimann Industrial Center and the Pasco Industrial Center 395 are the newest opportunities available for industry. For more information, visit www.portofpasco.org.