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\$4 MILLION EXPANSION AT FORMER AIR BASE

Boeing makes official unit's move to Heath

Saturday, March 05, 2005

Mark Niquette
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

HEATH, Ohio — Boeing Co. expects to complete a relocation of its defense business and 36 jobs from Texas to Heath by the end of next year or early 2006, officials said yesterday.

The company is investing \$4 million at its Central Ohio Aerospace and Technology Center, formerly the Newark Air Force Base. There, it will build a center to manufacture, test and repair antennae and other electronic systems for military aircraft. It will be the only such center in the United States, site manager Joe McNew said.

"This is very good news for Ohio," Gov. Bob Taft said during an event yesterday to announce the move officially.

Boeing will move operations from its aircraft-guidance-repair center in suburban Dallas to Heath starting in the summer, McNew said.

The company won't be able to complete the move until it finishes construction of what's called an anechoic chamber in Heath to test the antennae used on the Airborne Warning and Control Systems aircraft, or AWACS.

The antenna systems provide electronic surveillance on the AWACS and must be carefully calibrated in the chamber before being shipped for use on the aircraft, McNew said.

The antennae are used on 33 AWACS flown by the U.S. Air Force, 17 used by NATO and four by the French, Boeing said.

The state is providing about \$2 million for the project in loans and tax credits, and the Heath-Newark-Licking County Port Authority is providing a \$450,000 grant.

McNew said the move from Texas could lead to up to 35 additional jobs in Heath in the coming years as production decisions are made about the next generation of antenna systems.

Boeing employs 630 workers at its Heath operations.

They repair, test and calibrate guidance and navigation systems for military aircraft including the F-15 and B-2 bomber and the Minuteman III missile system.

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The majority of the work is done under one roof in 247,800 square feet at the former Air Force base, which Boeing took over in 1996.

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