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**Media Contact:**

Leslie Blair  
Oklahoma Department of Commerce  
405-815-5241  
[leslie.blair@okcommerce.gov](mailto:leslie.blair@okcommerce.gov)

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## **State Aerospace Program Finishes First Successful Year, Sets Goals for 2020**

**OKLAHOMA CITY** – The Oklahoma ACES (Aerospace Commerce Economic Services) program recently celebrated the end of its first year and set plans for the future. Created under House Bill 2578 and launched on Nov. 1, 2018, the primary goal of ACES is to establish a common statewide strategy for the growth of the Oklahoma aerospace industry. Throughout their first year, ACES hosted quarterly Advisory Forums. These forums were open to the public to share information about the ACES program and gather input from aerospace leaders across the state. At their latest forum, prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Oklahoma Aerospace Forum, the group discussed workforce development, marketing Oklahoma’s aerospace industry and Oklahoma’s global aerospace presence in 2020.

Don Wetekam, Program Director, Oklahoma ACES, also announced the top priorities for 2020, including:

- Establish “Strategic Working Groups” of aerospace experts in the areas of workforce development, advanced/emerging tech and propulsion sustainment to create measurable deliverables for progress;
- Host the first two of a series of Oklahoma aerospace career fairs/hiring events across the state planned for January 15 and January 22 in Tulsa and Midwest City, respectively;
- Populate the online [Oklahoma Aerospace Asset Map](#) with more than 400 aerospace-related entities and build on the features and capabilities of the map to make it more powerful.
- Achieve 15 aerospace project “wins” (expansions or attractions of aerospace companies leading to an increase in jobs or investment).

“Looking back over the past 12 months, we’ve established strong momentum for the program,” said Wetekam. “While there are always more things to be done, our inaugural year was clearly a success. Working with other state and local community partners, recruited new aerospace companies to the state, aided in the expansion of existing

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business and enhanced the Oklahoma brand as a national hub for the aerospace industry.”

During its first year, the program recorded impressive results:

- 331 separate activities, including business meetings, site visits, tradeshow, engagements with partners, and more
- 112 Oklahoma aerospace companies engaged
- More than 100,000 social media impressions from sharing Oklahoma’s aerospace message

Organizations or companies interested in learning more about the Oklahoma ACES initiative or participating in the upcoming aerospace career fairs/hiring events should contact Leshia Pearson at [leshia.pearson@okcommerce.gov](mailto:leshia.pearson@okcommerce.gov). To learn more about Oklahoma ACES, visit [okaces.org](http://okaces.org).

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