

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **RFD Agreement with International MRO Provider, AAR, to Bring Jobs, Offer Expanded Service Capabilities to Rockford** *Support from Gov. Quinn, Sen. Durbin Integral to Region's Economic Growth*

**Rockford, Ill.** – The Greater Rockford Airport Authority (GRAA), in partnership with Governor Quinn, Senator Durbin, Congresswoman Bustos, Winnebago County Chairman Christiansen and City of Rockford Mayor Morrissey, have reached an agreement with the largest nationwide and third-largest global Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) provider, AAR, to build a new hangar facility on Chicago Rockford International Airport (RFD) grounds. The facility is expected to employ up to 500 people and expands RFD's current service offerings and infrastructure.

"This is a monumental economic and workforce development opportunity for RFD and the Rockford region," said Mike Dunn, RFD Executive Director. "We look forward to welcoming AAR and are thankful for the collaboration and tireless dedication of Governor Quinn, Senator Durbin and all of the partners to make this a reality."

The 200,000 square-foot MRO facility is expected to operate 24 hours a day and will service next-generation, wide-body aircraft. This will allow for scheduled and unscheduled service, modification and overhaul and all other support services for military and commercial aircraft.

"I'm proud to have played a role in the negotiations that took place over the course of the past two years between AAR, a first-class Illinois employer, and GRAA, an airport authority determined to take full advantage of its own untapped potential," said U.S. Senator Dick Durbin. "With this exciting agreement and the new pipeline of aviation mechanics from Rock Valley College, the local landscape has changed. Rockford has solidified its role as an aerospace giant and businesses across the nation should take notice. Today's announcement of a new state-of-the-art facility that will soon employ 500 people in good paying jobs is only the beginning. The future is bright at RFD."

Final agreements between the partners are currently being developed and construction is expected to begin within the year. The hangar will be located in the mid-field area of the airport and is slated to open in Spring 2016.

Rockford joins AAR's six other MRO locations (Duluth, MN; Oklahoma City, OK; Miami, FL; Lake Charles, LA; Indianapolis, IN and Hot Springs, AR) and was ultimately selected due to the region's centralized location, cost-effectiveness, availability of specialized technical talent and RFD development amenability. The region's noted supply chain, which supports all aspects of the aerospace cluster including manufacturing, assembly, maintenance, repair and overhaul services, warehousing and distribution, was also a strong factor.

“AAR is pleased to announce that with the help of local and state government, we will be building a new aircraft maintenance facility in Rockford. Based on the strong financial performance and growth projections of U.S. carriers, AAR anticipates healthy demand for maintenance of next-generation aircraft in North America. To meet this future demand and position our Company for growth, we are designing a world-class hangar to complement our existing network of 6 MRO facilities in the U.S.,” said David Storch, Chairman and CEO of AAR, a global aerospace and defense contractor. “AAR’s investment in Rockford would not be possible without the economic incentives provided by the state of Illinois, which we are proud to call home, and Senator Durbin’s ongoing support of Illinois companies and the aerospace sector.”

The agreement is a result of more than two and a half years of discussions and follows a series of aerospace wins for the region including the current construction of a second campus for Woodward and the recent ground-breaking of the 40,000 square-foot Rock Valley College (RVC) Aviation Maintenance Technology Program (AMT) facility. Graduates of the AMT Program are prepared to join the ranks of the more than 6,500 workers in the region who are currently employed in aerospace companies like AAR, assuming positions as airline or general aviation engine and/or airframe mechanics.

Governor Pat Quinn today announced a \$15 million state investment to build the new maintenance facility. The announcement is part of Governor Quinn’s agenda to create jobs and drive Illinois’ economy forward.

“Today’s announcement means Rockford’s economy is taking off,” Governor Quinn said. “We welcome AAR to Rockford and are pleased to be a partner with them in creating hundreds of jobs that will be in demand for many years to come.”

The \$15 million investment comes through the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) from Build Illinois bond funds. DCEO also will provide the company with a \$600,000 investment toward training costs for its new employees.

The Rockford region is a prominent hub of aerospace activity and aviation manufacturing in the country, boasting more than 200 industry specific companies and is home to a critical mass of tier-one aerospace suppliers including Boeing, Woodward, UTC Aerospace Systems and GE Aviation. The region’s rate of manufacturing employment is twice the national average, with more than 80 percent of Illinois’ aerospace workforce located in the Rockford area.

AAR is a global aerospace and defense contractor that employs more than 6,000 people in 17 countries. Based in Wood Dale, Illinois, AAR supports commercial, government and defense customers through two operating segments: Aviation Services and Technology Products. AAR’s services include inventory management and parts distribution; aircraft maintenance, repair and overhaul; and expeditionary airlift. AAR’s products include cargo systems and containers; mobility systems and shelters; advanced aerostructures; and command and control systems. More information can be found at [www.aarcorp.com](http://www.aarcorp.com).

RFD is served by two airlines: Allegiant and Apple Vacations. RFD serves eight non-stop destinations including Cancun, Ft. Myers, Las Vegas, Orlando, Phoenix, Puerto Vallarta, Punta Cana and Tampa Bay. RFD was named the 2013 Primary Airport of the Year by the Illinois Department of Transportation’s Division of Aeronautics. For more information on RFD and flight schedules, visit [FlyRFD.com](http://FlyRFD.com).

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