



## 2023-2024 Florida Job Growth Grant Fund Public Infrastructure Grant Proposal

**Government Entity:** City of DeFuniak Springs (DFS)  
**Location:** DeFuniak Springs Airport (54J)  
**Project:** Aerospace Technology and Advanced Manufacturing Revitalization Project  
**Total Grant Requested:** **\$1,801,550**  
**Total Phase I-III Infrastructure Costs:** \$24,341,643  
**Contact:** Jennifer J. Green, CAE, DPL  
(On behalf of the city of DeFuniak Springs per Council direction)  
President, Liberty Partners of Tallahassee, LLC  
(850) 528-8809; (850) 910-2678  
[office@libertypartnersfl.com](mailto:office@libertypartnersfl.com)

### Summary Request

Through funds from the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund, state appropriations and Federal funding sources, the City of DeFuniak Springs will construct three new hangars (Hangars 18-20) and associated taxiways and access roads at the City's publicly owned airport. This project will support the establishment of multiple Targeted-Industry employers with a promise to provide high-skill, high-wage jobs within Florida's North Central Rural Area of Opportunity (RAO).

As a result of a multi-year redevelopment, DeFuniak Springs Airport has been shortlisted by multiple RPAS (Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems) and AAM (Advanced Air Mobility) Original Equipment Manufacturers, along with Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) companies who will create jobs within multiple Targeted Industries including Information Technology, Aviation and Aerospace, and Advanced Manufacturing. Based on growth trends, the Florida Department of Transportation has indicated that Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) will be incorporated into the Statewide Transportation Plan within the next five years, indicating the critical nature of investing in infrastructure within this industry.

Although the airport's geographic location, runway length, and available real estate are conducive to these developments and viewed favorably by companies who hope to relocate to this site, the Airport requires additional city-owned hangar space that will allow these companies to flourish, establishing their operations through long-term, fair market value leases. Distinct from this infrastructure request, the project also includes a significant workforce development and educational component that provides workforce skills and credentials applicable on an industry-wide scale.

### **Site Overview and Capital Improvement Plan**

The DeFuniak Springs Airport is a city owned and operated, general aviation, public use airport located in a Rural Area of Opportunity at the junction of Interstate 10, U.S. Highway 90, U.S. Highway 331, and the Florida, Gulf, and Atlantic Mainline (Formerly CSX Railway). Triggered by the departure of the City's two major employers over the past decade, DeFuniak Springs chose to invest in Walton County's sole airport because of its Northwest Florida centrality, intermodal assets, and potential to support future business and workforce development institutions.

One of the key competitive advantages of this facility lies in the fact that it is close to other airports, yet provides comparatively greater runway accessibility and maintains real estate sufficient for cost-effective growth.

Nearby commercial airports include Panama City Airport (ECP), Destin-Fort Walton Airport (VPS), and Pensacola International Airport (PNS). DeFuniak Springs is highly desirable to aviation and aerospace companies who wish to serve these larger facilities and capitalize on the Panhandle's growing aerospace industry, yet also require room for growth and frequent runway access unhindered by commercial aviation traffic. This is one of the site's greatest competitive advantages.

### **Project Description**

This is one of the final phases of project with a price tag of over \$30 million, and has fostered incredibly positive public feedback. The Phase I construction of a new terminal facility will conclude in 2023, and the completed Phase II lengthening (5,000') and widening of runway 9-27 will occur in 2024.

This request represents the third and final phase, constructing Hangars 18-20 with an access road and taxiway connector to the runway 9-27 expansion. This new 800-foot parallel taxiway will ensure the capacity building benefits of the 9-27 expansion are realized and safely support a projected 35 percent increase in 54J's air traffic. Adjoining the parallel taxiway, the access road development will connect to three new hangars, which include two 6,400 sq ft and one 10,000 sq ft structure, to accommodate OEM, MRO, and Information Technology industries in the available area Southeast of runway 9-27. Costs funded by this request will include engineering, construction, permitting, utility installation, lighting, drainage, signage, fencing, and markings. Following an award and agreement, this project is set to begin immediately and will require one year to complete.

## Economic Recovery, Diversification, and Enhancement

Location is fundamental to DeFuniak Springs Airport’s CIP because modern aviation businesses recognize the unduplicated benefits of a regionally central, multimodal airport with optimal air space. The Phase III companies with earnest intentions toward this facility include a prominent blue UAS MRO, an established fixed wing VTOL and BVLOS UAS manufacturer, a remotely piloted eVTOL manufacturer, a single piloted eVTOL manufacturer, and a leading aviation communications infrastructure provider.

Phase III construction will occur on publicly owned property, and no infrastructure developments will be designed or assigned for the exclusive benefit of any single company, corporation, or business entity. Rather, the infrastructure developments outlined in this proposal are elements of a city approved Airport 54J CIP that also aligns with: (1) the DeFuniak Springs 2025 Comprehensive Plan goal to “provide a safe, cost-effective multimodal transportation system;” (2) the DeFuniak Springs Community Redevelopment Plan vision to establish a “thriving year-round economy;” and (3) the Walton County Redevelopment Plan objective to expand 54J’s services “as an available asset to aviation and aerospace-dependent industries.”

Phase III is a response to actionable insights aligned with the City’s broader economic goals, and the construction of Hangars 18-20 and a taxiway/access road connector will position DeFuniak Springs to offer market value leases and secure major 54J employers, initially creating a minimum of 200 net new high-wage jobs within the project timeframe. Hanger construction is proposed for completion in late 2024, with a job ramp-up commencing immediately thereafter.

Jobs will be created due to the relocation of at least four new small to medium-sized companies onsite, all operating in Qualified Targeted Industries identified by Florida Commerce. These companies include a drone manufacturing operation, air traffic telecommunications provider, maintenance, repair, and overhaul facility (MRO), and aviation component manufacturing company. Although the minimum number of jobs created by these facilities are included in the table below, this project is likely to result in far greater impacts in the coming decade.

<b>Targeted Industry</b>	<b>Jobs Created in First Year</b>	<b>Total Jobs, Years 1-10</b>
Advanced Manufacturing and Transportation (NAICIS Sectors 31-33, 336412, 336413 as examples)	10	60
Aviation and Aerospace (NAICS 488190)	15	45
Information Technology (NAICS 51, 517,518 and 541)	5	55
Corporate Headquarters (NAICS Sector 55)	18	40 (+ 300 Remote Positions)
<b>Totals:</b>		<b>200 (Local) 500 (Total)</b>

**Project (Phase III) Budget**

Phase I and II construction of Airport 54J’s CIP are underway, and, with last dollar funding support, the synchronous buildout of the Phase III taxiway/access road and commercial hangar (Hangers 18-20) development can commence and complete in 2024. The City of DeFuniak Springs has secured \$1,000,000 in state appropriation funding for Phase III construction costs and requests **\$1,801,550** in Public Infrastructure Grant Funds from the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund to enable this job growth development project.

**ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION COSTS**

<b>Airport 54J Phase III Infrastructure Improvements</b>	<b>Cost Breakdown</b>
Taxiway/Access Road Development	\$1,945,000
Hangar 18-20 Construction	\$2,325,000
Construction Management, Engineering, and Contingency	\$1,131,550
<b>Total Estimated Construction Cost</b>	<b>\$5,401,550</b>

**ANTICIPATED FUNDING PLAN**

<b>Phase III Cost Estimate</b>	<b>State Appropriation and other Infrastructure Funding Sources</b>	<b>Public Infrastructure Grant Request</b>
\$5,401,550	\$3,600,000	<b>\$1,801,550</b>

**Florida Job Growth Grant Fund**

**1. Program Requirements**

**A. Provide a detailed description of the public infrastructure improvements.**

This project includes the construction of three new hangars (6,400, 6,400, and 10,000 square feet), along with a taxiway, access road, and associated utilities. This project will enable commercial developments within Targeted Industries including Aviation and Aerospace, Advanced Manufacturing, and Information Technology. See the attached narrative for specific information.

**B. Provide Location of the public infrastructure, including physical address and county of project.**

DeFuniak Springs Airport (54J), 1931 U.S. Highway 90 West, DeFuniak Springs, FL 32433 (Walton County)

**C. Is this infrastructure currently owned by the public?** Yes

**D. Provide current property owner.**

City of DeFuniak Springs

**E. Is this infrastructure predominantly for public use or does it predominantly benefit the public?** Yes

**F. Will the public infrastructure improvements be for the exclusive benefit of any single company, corporation, or business entity?** No

**G. Provide a detailed description of, and quantitative evidence demonstrating, how the proposed public infrastructure project will promote:**

- \* Economic development in specific regions of the state
- \* Economic diversification; or
- \* Economic enhancement of a targeted industry.

(1) Describe how the project will promote specific job growth. Include the number of jobs that will be retained or created, and in which industry(ies) the net new jobs will be created using the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes. Where applicable, you may list specific businesses that will retain or create jobs or make capital investments.

The project will create a minimum of 200 direct jobs within the Advanced Manufacturing, Aviation and Aerospace, Information Technology, and Corporate

Headquarters industries, with a total of 500 direct jobs when remote personnel are included. See chart below for additional information.

Targeted Industry	Jobs Created in First Year	Total Jobs, Years 1-10
Advanced Manufacturing and Transportation (NAICS Sectors 31-33, 336412, 336413 as examples)	10	60
Aviation and Aerospace (NAICS 488190)	15	45
Information Technology (NAICS 51, 517,518 and 541)	5	55
Corporate Headquarters (NAICS Sector 55)	18	40 (+ 300 Remote Positions)
Totals:		<b>200 (Local) 500 (Total)</b>

(2) Proved a detailed explanation of how the public infrastructure improvements will connect to a broader economic development vision for the community and benefit additional current or future businesses.

See attached narrative.

## 2. Additional Information

### A. Provide the proposed commencement date and number of days required to complete construction of the public infrastructure project.

If awarded, construction drawings will be advertised, reviewed, and approved at a publicly noticed City Council meeting, totaling approximately 90 days. After awarding, the City will issue a notice to proceed with construction anticipated to require 290 days.

### B. What permits are necessary for the public infrastructure project?

The project will require standard building permits, which have a 15-30 day turnaround. Additionally, the project will require Stormwater permits from the Northwest Florida Water Management District, which have a 45-day turnaround time. There are no federal or environmental/mitigation permits required as part of this project.

**C. Detail whether required permits have been secured, and if not, detail the timeline for securing these permits. Additionally, if any of these permits are local permits, will these permits be prioritized?** No permit expediting is anticipated, and City of DeFuniak Springs and NFWMD ERP permits will be secured between November 2023 and January 2024.

**D. What is the future land use and zoning designation on the proposed site for the infrastructure improvements, and will the improvements conform to those uses?**

The developments described in this project application are included in the DeFuniak Springs Airport Master Plan, previously approved by the City Council, and the project is consistent with the City's current zoning designations and planned use for this property.

**E. Will an amendment to the local comprehensive plan or a development order be required on the site of the proposed project or on adjacent property to accommodate the infrastructure and potential current job creation opportunities?** No

**F. Is the project ready to commence upon grant approval and contract execution? If no, please explain.** Yes. The design phase is complete, and the City selected an airport engineering consultant. Construction bids remain and ready to commence upon grant approval.

**G. Does the project have a local match amount?** Yes.

**If yes, describe the entity providing the match and the amount.** \$1,000,000 in state appropriation funding, and over \$28 million in investment from state, local, and federal sources. See attached narrative.

**H. Provide any additional information or attachments to be considered for this proposal. Maps and other supporting documents are encouraged.** See attached narrative.

### 3. Program Budget

**Estimated Costs and Sources of Funding:** Include all applicable public infrastructure costs and other funding sources available to support the proposal.

**(1). Total Amount Requested** \$1,801,550 Florida Job Growth Grant Fund

A. Other Public Infrastructure Project Funding Sources:

City/County	_____	
Private Sources	_____	
Other (grants, etc.)	\$1,000,000	Please Specify: State Appropriation
Other (grants,etc)	\$2,600,000	Please Specify: Alternative Funding Sources

B. Public Infrastructure Project Costs

Construction	\$5,401,550
Reconstruction	_____
Design & Engineering	_____
Land Acquisition	_____
Land Improvement	_____

Other	_____
<b>Total Project Costs</b>	\$5,401,550

**C. Provide a detailed budget narrative, including the timing and steps necessary to obtain the funding and any other pertinent budget-related information.**

Estimated costs include the construction of three new hangars, an access road, taxiway, and utilities. Specific expenses include engineering, construction, permitting, utility installation, lighting, drainage, signage, fencing, and markings.

See attached narrative for project cost breakdown.

**4. Approvals and Authority**

**A. If the government entity is awarded grant funds based on this proposal, what approvals must be obtained before it can execute a grant agreement with the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (e.g., approval of a board, commission, or council)?**

Approval by the DeFuniak Springs City Council.

**B. If approval of a board, commission, council, or other group is needed prior to execution of an agreement between the governmental entity and the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity:**

**i. Provide the schedule of upcoming meetings for the group for a period of at least six months.**

The DeFuniak Springs City Council meets bi-monthly on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month.

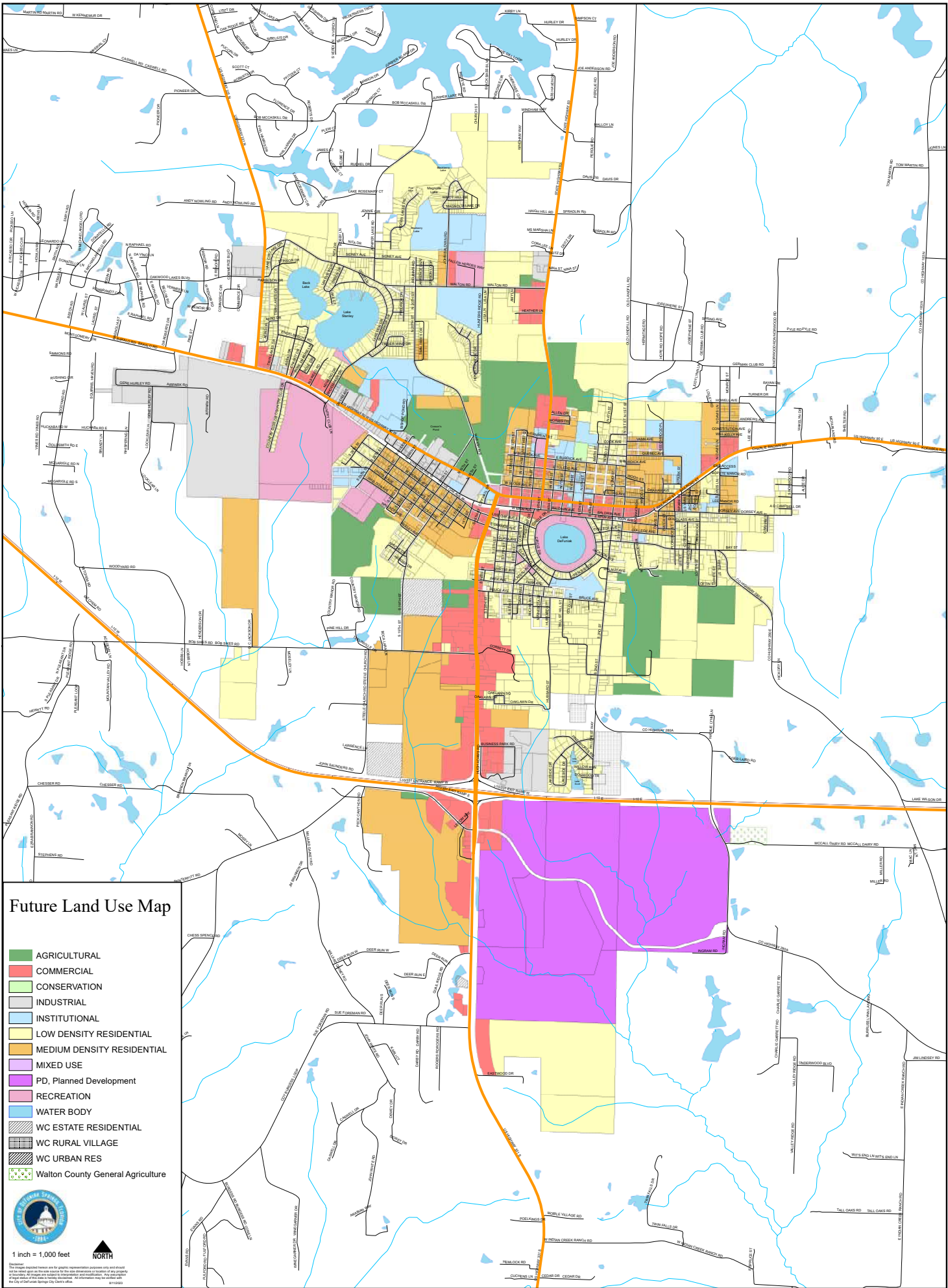
**ii. State whether the entity is willing and able to hold special meetings, and if so, upon how many days' notice.**

The DeFuniak Springs City Council can call a meeting with six (6) hours' notice.

**C. Attach evidence that the undersigned has all necessary authority to execute this proposal on behalf of the governmental entity. This evidence may take a variety of forms, including but not limited to: a delegation of authority, citation to relevant laws or codes, policy documents, etc.**







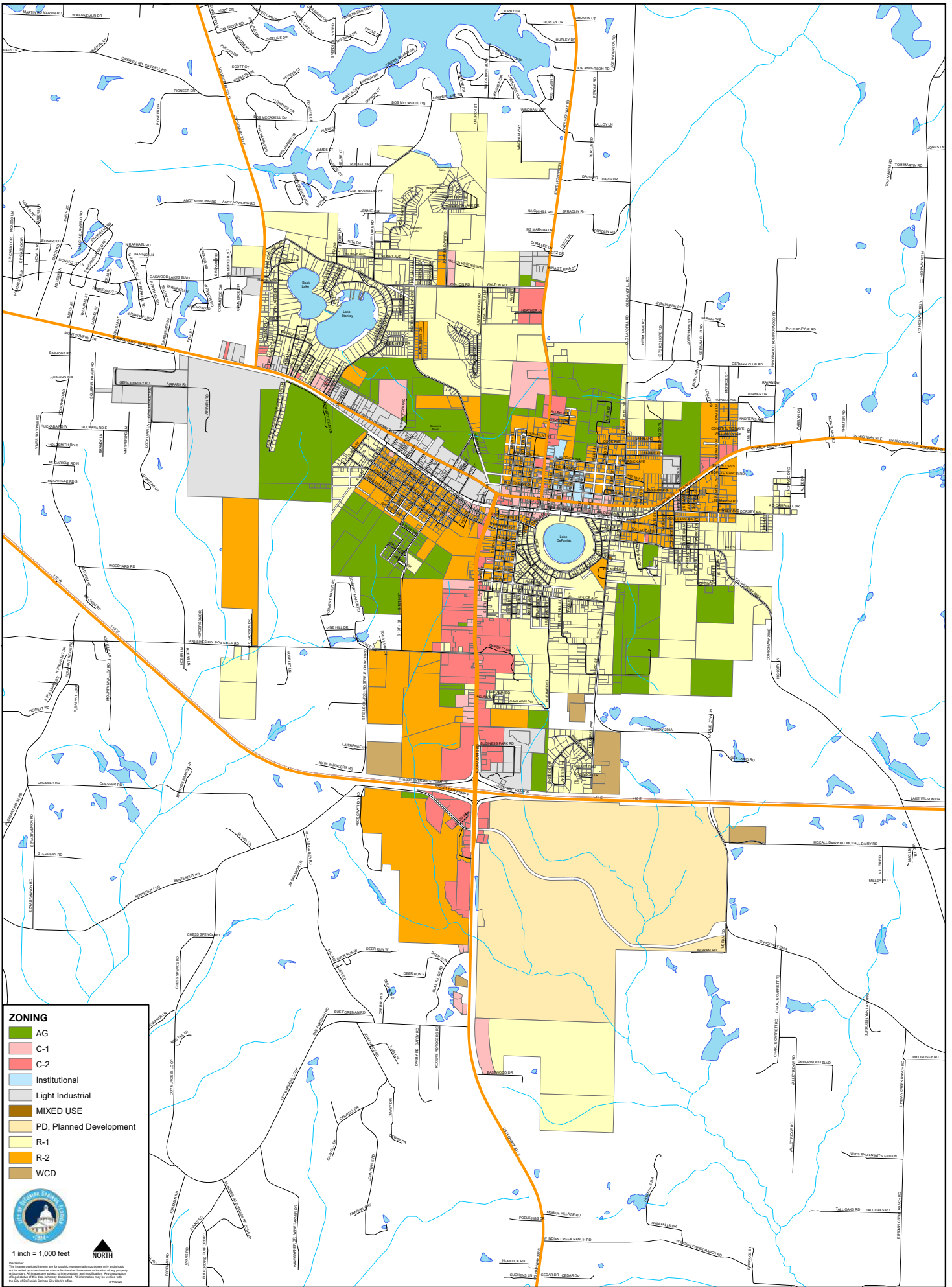
### Future Land Use Map

- AGRICULTURAL
- COMMERCIAL
- CONSERVATION
- INDUSTRIAL
- INSTITUTIONAL
- LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- MIXED USE
- PD, Planned Development
- RECREATION
- WATER BODY
- WC ESTATE RESIDENTIAL
- WC RURAL VILLAGE
- WC URBAN RES
- Walton County General Agriculture



1 inch = 1,000 feet  
 NORTH

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- ZONING**
- AG
  - C-1
  - C-2
  - Institutional
  - Light Industrial
  - MIXED USE
  - PD, Planned Development
  - R-1
  - R-2
  - WCD



1 inch = 1,000 feet

**NORTH**

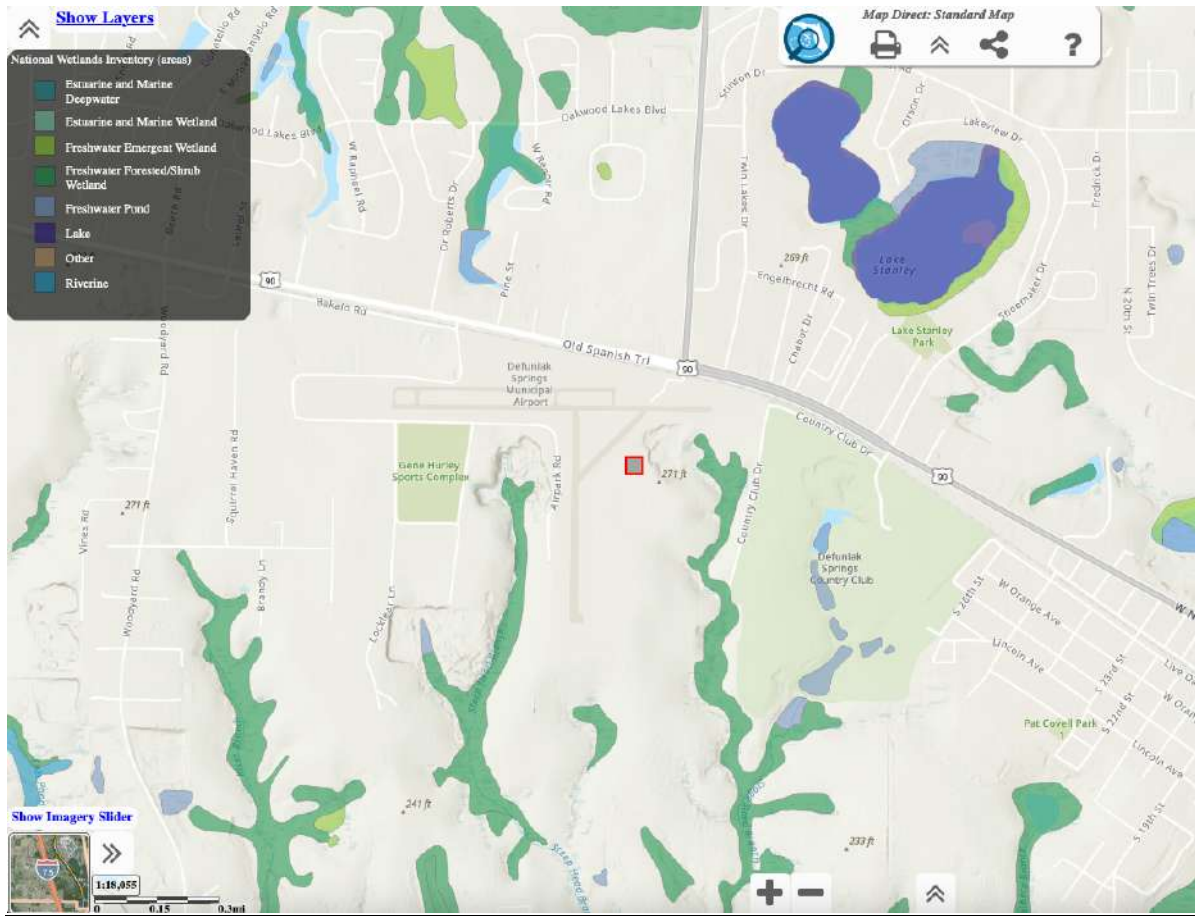
This map was prepared for the City of Orangeburg, South Carolina. It is not intended to be used for any other purpose. The City of Orangeburg, South Carolina, is not responsible for any errors or omissions on this map. The City of Orangeburg, South Carolina, is not responsible for any damages or liabilities resulting from the use of this map. The City of Orangeburg, South Carolina, is not responsible for any changes to the zoning code after the date of this map. The City of Orangeburg, South Carolina, is not responsible for any changes to the zoning code after the date of this map.

## Attachment D – FEMA Flood Zone Map



As noted above, the project is outside the 100-year floodplain and is within Zone X (Minimal flood risk).

## Attachment E – DEP Wetlands Map



As depicted above, the project has no wetlands located on site.



**Florida House of Representatives**  
**Representative Shane Abbott**  
District 5

District Office:  
908 US Highway West  
DeFuniak Springs, FL 32433-1436  
(850) 951-0547

Tallahassee Office:  
1402 The Capitol  
402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300  
(850) 717-5005

Email: [Shane.Abbott@myfloridahouse.com](mailto:Shane.Abbott@myfloridahouse.com)

January 18, 2023

Mr. Lewis Bear, Chairman  
Triumph Gulf Coast Board  
P.O. Box 12007  
Tallahassee, FL 32317

Dear Chairman Bear:

As the State Representative for the City of DeFuniak Springs, **I would like to respectfully request your support for Triumph Gulf Coast application #284** relating to the DeFuniak Springs Municipal Airport and Project CEPTA (Center for Emerging Professional Technologies in Aviation).

As the only airport in Walton County, the DeFuniak Springs Municipal Airport serves the aviation and transportation needs of both the city and county. In addition to private and recreational flying, the airport also supports commercial and corporate aviation functions.

In the last few years, the City has prioritized growth and development of the airport through leveraging over \$31 million in funding along with investments from the County, the Florida Department of Transportation, the Federal Aviation Authority and American Rescue Plan Act dollars. The two most notable airport infrastructure improvements currently underway are a new state-of-the-art terminal and extension of the main runway to over 5,000 feet to serve larger aircraft.

The objective of Project CEPTA is to provide an aviation workforce training program to address workforce shortfalls in aviation training and accommodate the rise in employment opportunities in the advance air mobility industry. The program will place an emphasis on career training in advanced aviation that will yield high demand, high wage jobs through the completion of at least 8,500 CAPE and industry certifications. This will go a long way in achieving my goal of enlarging the workforce pool in Walton and surrounding counties for many years to come.

For additional information, please contact me directly at (850) 333-0747 or the project point of contact Jennifer Green at (850) 528-8809. Thank you again for your consideration of this transformation project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shane Abbott".

Shane Abbott  
District 5

**WALTON COUNTY, FLORIDA**  
**Board of County Commissioners**

William "Boots" McCormick, District 1  
Danny Glidewell, District 2 - Vice Chair  
Mike Barker, District 3- Chair  
Donna Johns, District 4  
Tony Anderson, District 5



P.O. Box 1355  
DeFuniak Springs, FL 32435  
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November 22, 2022

David Bear, Chairman  
Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.  
P.O. Box 12007  
Tallahassee, FL. 32317

RE: City of DeFuniak Springs Center for Emerging Professional Technologies in Aviation (CEPTA)  
Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. Application #284

Dear Chairman:

On behalf of the Walton County Board of County Commissioners, I would like to respectfully request your support for application #284 by the City of DeFuniak Springs for Project CEPTA-Center for Emerging Professional Technologies in Aviation. At the November 22, 2022 Board of County Commissioners meeting, the board approved this letter of support and authorized its Chair to sign said letter.

It has been well documented that Walton County represents one of the Nation's fastest growing counties. As our only airport, the DeFuniak Springs Municipal Airport represents a tremendous economic asset for attracting relocating companies and advancing job creation in the region. Thanks to substantial investments from both the City of DeFuniak Springs and Walton County, along with state and Federal agencies, our airport is poised for unprecedented growth. The geographic location of the airport and proximity to I-10, places the airport in an ideal strategic location with access and connectivity for supply and distribution via road, rail, air and port.

As Walton County continues to grow in population, it is imperative we embrace emerging technologies for our workforce that align with industry pathways. Project CEPTA capitalizes on the burgeoning economic impact of unmanned aircraft systems and will place the DeFuniak Springs Municipal Airport at the forefront of innovation while helping support local economies. Therefore, we are encouraged by the potential for a strong return on investment for this exciting aviation project by providing training necessary for new high skill, high wage jobs within Walton County and Northwest Florida.

Thank you again for your consideration of this truly transformational project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Bear", is written over a horizontal line.

Chair  
Walton County Board of County Commissioners

**A. Russell Hughes**  
Superintendent of Schools



145 Park Street  
DeFuniak Springs, FL 32435  
850.892.1100  
Fax 850.892.1191  
[www.walton.k12.fl.us](http://www.walton.k12.fl.us)

To Whom It May Concern:

Walton County School District is pleased to provide this letter of support for the *Center for Electric Pilot Training and Research (CEPTER)*. Locating this project at the DeFuniak Springs Airport will directly connect business and industry with education in this area. Adjoining counties can certainly benefit from this location, as well. Project *CEPTER* supports the Walton County Career Pathways Initiative and aligns both secondary and postsecondary career educational programs with the regional economy.

The proposed project will make available a range of services to this rapidly growing community. The innovative approach of making the facility /education available to Walton County Schools for their training needs really extends the usefulness and value of this model.

We support this project and look forward to collaborating with the DeFuniak Springs City Council, Walton County Board of County Commissioners and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University as the project moves forward. Please let us know how we can further support these efforts in building strong communities through innovative education.

Sincerely,



A. Russell Hughes

Superintendent of Schools

*"Preparing the Whole Child for a Life of Success"*

Tammy Smith  
District 1

Kim Kirby  
District 2

Bill Eddins, Jr.  
District 3

Jeri Michie  
District 4

Jason Catalano  
District 5





Success from any point of view.

76 North Sixth Street  
DeFuniak Springs, FL 32433  
Phone (850) 892-4859  
Fax (850) 892-8454

David Bear, Chairman  
Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.  
P.O. Box 12007  
Tallahassee, FL. 32317

RE: City of DeFuniak Springs Center for Emerging Professional Technologies in Aviation (CEPTA) Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. Application #284

Dear Chairman:

On behalf of the Walton County Economic Development Alliance (WCEDA), **I would like to respectfully request your support** for application #284 by the City of DeFuniak Springs for Project CEPTA.

The WCEDA has been diligent in promoting the diversification of the County's economy for the last several years and are committed to attracting new investments to the region that will create high wage, high skill jobs. Our team understands the current and expected economic landscape and are familiar with the target industries for Walton County. We are currently developing a plan of action for optimal economic growth that will benefit the entire region and look forward to implementing this new plan.

As we work to facilitate growth and expansion by supporting current and new businesses, the DeFuniak Springs Municipal Airport represents one of our greatest economic assets in Walton County. We are confident that Application #284 will make significant strides towards addressing the needs of a rapidly growing community. The expansion of our airport will also further our economic development goals and ensure we have the capacity for increased recreational and corporate traffic. Therefore, we are confident this investment will yield an incredible return and provide a tremendous economic benefit to the region.

Thank you again for your consideration of this truly transformational project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bill Imfeld".

Bill Imfeld, Executive Director



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Fax: (850) 267-0603  
[www.waltonareachamber.com](http://www.waltonareachamber.com)

December 20, 2022

David Bear, Chairman  
Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.  
P.O. Box 12007  
Tallahassee, FL. 32317

RE: City of DeFuniak Springs Center for Emerging Professional Technologies in Aviation (CEPTA) Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. Application #284

Dear Chairman:

On behalf of the Walton Area Chamber of Commerce, **I would like to respectfully request your support** for application #284 by the City of DeFuniak Springs for Project CEPTA.

As the only airport in Walton County, the DeFuniak Springs Municipal Airport represents one of our greatest economic assets and due to investments from both the City and County is poised for tremendous growth. Due to its central location and proximity to I-10, the geographic location of the airport makes DeFuniak Springs a prime location to establish the CEPTA program. As the Walton County area continues to grow in population, it is becoming increasingly important that we continue to grow this critical infrastructure. The construction of this project will put the airport at the forefront of innovation and keep the county's economic growth in line with its population growth.

We know from recent examples in other parts of the state and country that the proposed aviation workforce training program will lead to a noted rise in employment opportunities and increased local economic impact. The emerging technology surrounding the advanced air mobility industry will position the region as a model for other parts of the state. Therefore, we are confident this investment will yield incredible return and provide a tremendous economic benefit to the region. The expansion of our airport will also further our economic development goals and ensure we have the capacity for increased recreational and corporate air traffic.

Thank you again for your consideration of this truly transformational project.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Megan R. Harrison".

Megan R. Harrison, IOM  
President and CEO



September 27, 2022

David Bear, Chairman  
Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.  
P.O. Box 12007  
Tallahassee, FL 32317

RE: City of DeFuniak Springs Center for Electric Pilot Training and Research (CEPTR) Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.  
Application #284

Dear Chairman Bear,

Founded in 1926 and fully embracing our mission to teach the science, practice, and business of aviation and aerospace, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU) is considered a higher education world leader in these endeavors. I serve as Executive Director of ERAU's Gaetz Aerospace Institute, a dual-enrollment program in over 145 Florida schools designed to introduce K-12 students to rigorous STEM-related courses as pathways to careers, college, and high-paying jobs.

Walton County Schools and ERAU enjoy strong and productive relationships across 10 secondary institutions, and I write today to affirm the ERAU Gaetz Aerospace Institute's support of the City of DeFuniak Springs' proposal (#284) to launch the Nation's first Center for Electric Pilot Training and Research (CEPTR). The Gaetz Aerospace Institute provides Walton County K-12 students with private pilot (PPL) ground school instruction, and Project CEPTR will stand in the gap to offer PPL flight training for these students.

Flight training schools represent the roots of aviation, but Boeing's 2022-2041 Pilot and Technician Outlook (PTO) forecasts a need for 602,000 new pilots within the commercial aviation sector. Receiving a PPL is a prerequisite for advancing to commercial (CPL) and airline transport pilot (ATP) certifications, and Project CEPTR is designed to accelerate the aviator pipeline and help alleviate this shortage. Embracing lower-cost, environmentally friendly electric training planes, Project CEPTR will diversify flight school access while increasing affordability.

Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration of Project CEPTR and the City of DeFuniak Springs' commitment to transforming PPL flight training through electric aviation.

Educationally yours,

Colleen Conklin, Ed. D., RPIC  
Assistant Professor & Executive Director of the Gaetz  
Aerospace Institute

1 Aerospace Boulevard  
Daytona Beach, FL 32114  
[colleen.conklin@erau.edu](mailto:colleen.conklin@erau.edu)



November 28, 2022

Mr. David Bear, Chairman  
Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.  
P.O. Box 12007  
Tallahassee, FL 32317

RE: City of DeFuniak Springs Center for Emerging Professional Technologies in Aviation (CEPTA)  
Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. Application #284

Dear Mr. Bear,

I am writing to express support of application #284 to Triumph Gulf Coast from the City of DeFuniak Springs Center for the Emerging Professional Technologies in Aviation (CEPTA).

Florida's Great Northwest is the regional economic development organization for the Panhandle. We provide technical support, lead generation and marketing support to our economic development organizations, including Walton County. The public infrastructure improvements and training components would greatly enhance the community's competitiveness to attract private sector investment and create quality jobs.

We will support Walton County and the City of DeFuniak Springs with marketing these new assets for business. We have several platforms for domestic and international outreach and will work together with all our partners to enhance the exposure of this project to site selectors and company decision makers for new opportunities.

If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at 850.527.0999 or [jconoley@fgnw.org](mailto:jconoley@fgnw.org). Thank you for your consideration of this exciting transformational opportunity.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Conoley  
President & CEO

# SPACE FLORIDA



January 3, 2023

Mr. Lewis Bear  
Chairman  
Triumph Gulf Coast Board  
P.O. Box 12007  
Tallahassee, FL 32317

Dear Chairman Bear:

Space Florida is pleased to provide our support to Triumph project #284 (DeFuniak Springs Airport) submitted by the City of DeFuniak Springs.

The State of Florida represents the very best in space-related technology, innovation, business venture and exploration. Aerospace and aviation industry leaders continue to make Florida their launch pad for new discoveries, businesses, and technologies. The eight disproportionately affected counties within the Triumph footprint represent significant opportunities for partnerships between Space Florida, private business and local governments to further the aerospace industry. After discussions about project #284 and the anticipated scope for the full application, we congratulate the City on a proposed workforce training program at the airport that is estimated to create more than 8500 certifications over 10 years.

While Space Florida does not have an immediate role in proposal #284, I believe the anticipated trajectory of the airport infrastructure development will provide an opportunity for Space Florida to explore participation in the future. This airport is uniquely situated in the Panhandle near I-10 and a railway and is the only airport in Walton County – a county growing at a rapid pace. With the right infrastructure in place, the DeFuniak Springs Airport will become a hub for aviation workforce training as well as economic development.

Thank you for your service on the Triumph Board. Should you need any additional information, please feel free to contact me at 321-730-5301.

Sincerely,

Frank DiBello  
President and CEO  
Space Florida

cc: City of DeFuniak Springs Council  
Walton County Board of County Commissioners



1808 Concept Ct. Suite 200  
Daytona Beach, FL 32114  
386.314.7829  
Info@CensysTech.com

December 21, 2022

Mr. David Bear  
Chairman  
Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.  
P.O. Box 12007  
Tallahassee, Florida 32317

RE: Project #284 at DeFuniak Springs Municipal Airfield (54J)

Dear Chairman Bear:

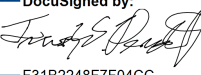
Censys Technologies Corporation is a Florida based emerging technology aerospace manufacturer that leads the industry in advanced Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) operational waivers.

DeFuniak Springs Municipal Airfield presents an incredible opportunity to utilize an existing public airfield in FAA Class G (uncontrolled) airspace that is centrally located in Florida's panhandle to support emerging technology growth across the region.

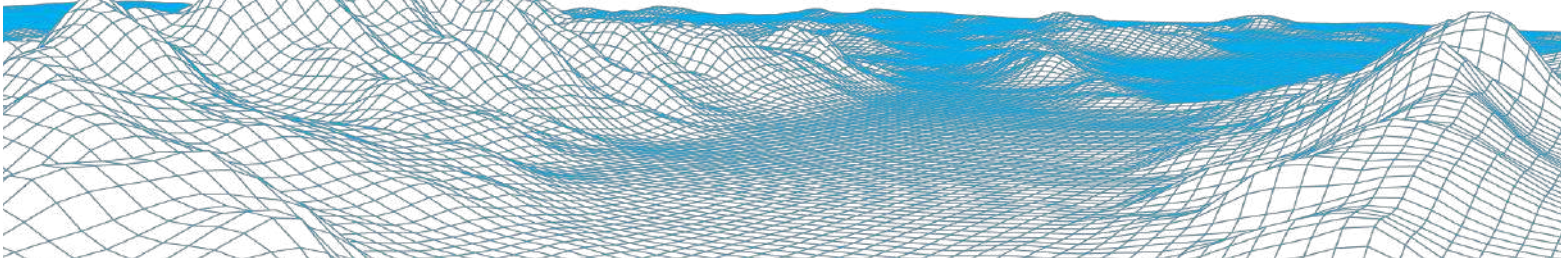
With the enhanced infrastructure for emerging technology and Unmanned Safety Institute's training and workforce development initiatives in the region, Censys Technologies would strongly consider relocating its maintenance, assembly, and repair to 54J. This location is centrally located to the FL panhandle and provides at least 4 regional airports for commercial travel.

Emerging technology is changing the way companies do business. This project connects the dots between needed infrastructure, collaboration between remotely piloted and traditional aviation, and workforce required to power it all.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:  
  
F31B2248F7F04CC...

Trevor Perrott  
Chief Executive Officer  
Co-Founder  
Censys Technologies





**UNMANNED SAFETY INSTITUTE**  
1500 E Taylor Rd, Deland, FL 32724  
+1 407-499-2051

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**December 21, 2022**

Mr. David Bear  
Chairman  
Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.  
P.O. Box 12007  
Tallahassee, Florida 32317

RE: Project #284 at DeFuniak Springs Municipal Airfield (54J)

**Dear Chairman Bear:**

Unmanned Safety Institute (USI) is a proud contributor to the state of Florida's aerospace workforce through aviation safety-based certification. With 18,000 logged training flights and over 11,000 safety-based certifications earned, USI leads the global emerging technology training industry in its data driven, risk-based approach to organizational standardization.

Project #284 presents an incredible opportunity to utilize an existing public airfield in FAA Class G (uncontrolled) airspace that is centrally located in Florida's panhandle, to deliver best in class flight training and certification for emerging aeronautical technologies.

USI intends to contribute \$13.8 Million over a 10-year period to increase the region's potential tied to this emerging technology, improving in-demand skill sets, income expectations, and overall industry growth. Emerging technologies are much more than small multi-rotor aircraft providing infrastructure and asset inspection. Rather, this emerging technology includes a wide application of robotics and implementation of new sustainable aviation fuels, vertical takeoff and landing aircraft, alternative propulsion technologies and cargo mobility platforms which enable rural package delivery more efficiently.



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It is an incredible time to be at the forefront of modern aviation and as such, DeFuniak Springs airport (54J) infrastructure enhancements present a unique, timely and valuable opportunity for the Florida panhandle to be a base of operations for emerging technology skillset development for both the current and future workforce. 54J infrastructure enhancements will provide the necessary improvements to build upon the geographic advantages of DeFuniak Springs, enable increased general aviation and corporate travel, and provide a footprint that is necessary and welcoming for future growth.

**Sincerely,**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Joshua Olds', is positioned below the word 'Sincerely,'.

**Joshua Olds**  
**President & CEO**  
**Co-Founder**  
**Unmanned Safety Institute**



NEAL P. DUNN, MD  
2ND DISTRICT, FLORIDA

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & COMMERCE

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-0902

840 WEST 11TH STREET  
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300 SOUTH ADAMS STREET  
TALLAHASSEE, FL 32301  
(850) 891-8610

466 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-5235

February 1, 2023

Mr. David Bear  
Chairman  
Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.  
P.O. Box 12007  
Tallahassee, FL 32317

RE: City of DeFuniak Springs, Center for Emerging Professional Technologies in Aviation (CEPTA), Application # 284

Dear Chairman Bear,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter in support of the City of DeFuniak Springs and their application to Triumph Gulf Coast for application # 284, Center for Emerging Professional Technologies in Aviation (CEPTA) proposed to be located at the DeFuniak Springs Airport.

Situated in the Florida Panhandle, Walton County is one of the Nation's fastest growing counties. Located both near I-10 and railways, DeFuniak Springs is poised for tremendous growth in the coming years.

If awarded, the anticipated full scope of the application would not only place the DeFuniak Springs Airport at the forefront of innovation in the field of unmanned aircraft systems but would also include a proposed workforce training program at the airport that is estimated to create more than 8,500 certifications over the next 10 years. For the future of Walton County as it continues to grow, it is imperative that such opportunities for economic development be embraced.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this worthwhile request. If you have any questions, please contact Bethany Boggs on my staff at (850) 785-0812.

Sincerely,



Neal P. Dunn, M.D.  
Member of Congress

# Parrot®

January 21, 2023

Mr. David Bear  
Chairman  
Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.  
P.O. Box 12007  
Tallahassee, Florida 32317

RE: Project #284 at DeFuniak Springs Municipal Airfield (54J)

Dear Chairman Bear:

Parrot Inc (a wholly owned subsidiary of France based Parrot Drones S.A.S Europe's largest drone producer) is an emerging technology aerospace manufacturer that leads the industry in compact Uncrewed Aircraft System manufacturing. With our professional drones, we provide best-in-class technology for defence, enterprise, government, inspection, first responders, firefighters, search-and-rescue teams, security agencies and surveying professionals.

Parrot's professional drones are trusted, secure and proven being used globally by the world's most demanding organisations, enterprises & governments.

The FBI, the NCIS, the US ARMY and the British Army are just a few who place their trust in Parrot drones.



Parrot fully supports project #284 at DeFuniak Springs Municipal Airfield as it presents an incredible opportunity to advance necessary skillsets tied to aviation safety and professionalism required of the industry.

With the enhanced infrastructure for emerging technology and Unmanned Safety Institute's (USI) training and workforce development initiatives in the region, Parrot looks forward to developing and supporting opportunities in this location under USI's leadership as a Parrot Authorized Maintenance Training and Repair Center.

Emerging technology is changing the way companies do business. Parrot encourages this project as it connects the dots between needed infrastructure for advanced operations, best in class training and certification, and workforce required to power it all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Roberts".

**Chris ROBERTS**  
CEO – Americas  
CS&MO – Global