BELL 505 ASSEMBLY CENTRE IN LAFAYETTE OPENS

News / Manufacturer

Bell Helicopter has opened a new assembly centre in Lafayette. The new centre will assemble the Bell 505 Jet Ranger X.

Louisiana Economic Development (LED) Secretary Steven Grissom and other state, regional and local officials joined Bell Helicopter's president and CEO, John Garrison, to commemorate the occasion at the Lafayette Regional Airport.

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Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal said: "Today's dedication of the Bell Helicopter Lafayette Assembly Centre opens a new era in Louisiana's rich history in aerospace. From the original home of Delta Airlines, to pre-World War II aircraft assembly operations, to NASA's space shuttle program and its current mission that will send manned flights to the moon and Mars, Louisiana has played a leading role in flight. Bell Helicopter recognised these historic accomplishments, along

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with the major energy-related transportation companies in our state that rely on helicopter transit. We're proud that Louisiana's rapidly improving business climate, our outstanding workforce and our unmatched quality of life led Bell Helicopter to make Louisiana its state of choice for this aerospace project, which will benefit our people for generations to come."

The new facility is leased by Bell Helicopter from the Lafayette Regional Airport. The project was funded by the State of Louisiana and the company plans to invest $11.4 million in equipment and tooling. Bell Helicopter is ramping up the hiring process for the facility, and assembly operations are expected to start soon with deliveries to follow in 2016 after certification of the helicopter.

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John Garrison president & CEO at Bell Helicopter added: "The Bell 505 Jet Ranger X is priced to compete and offers an exceptional combination of value, performance and features available on the market. We look forward to delivering this aircraft to our customers around the world and want to thank the state of Louisiana and Lafayette parish for going above and beyond to support our business."

Paul Watts, general manager of the Bell Helicopter Lafayette Aircraft Assembly Centre said: "We are excited to have successfully reached this milestone of the facility opening, and our proud to share in this moment with our customers, employees, suppliers and the Lafayette community. This advances us one step closer to production and delivery of this aircraft."

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