



AIRBUS READIES FOR MONDAY INAUGURATION OF U.S. PLANT

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On Monday, officials of European airplane maker Airbus will christen the company's first U.S. manufacturing site.

The Mobile, Ala., plant will be the final assembly site of Airbus' single-aisle A320 Family passenger jets, which encompass the A318, A319, A321 and A321XLR models.

The \$600 million plant on 116 acres will be led by Kansan Daryl Taylor, who as vice president and general manager will be responsible for the delivery of four airplanes a month by the beginning of 2018.

Before joining Airbus, Taylor was vice president and general manager for GKN Aerospace's Precision Machining business in Wellington and Bandy Aerospace in Burbank, Calif. He also worked in a variety of leadership posts at the former Hawker Beechcraft Corp. in Wichita for 12 years.

Other Kansas connections to the Mobile plant include Spirit AeroSystems, which manufactures

parts of the A320's wings, and Airbus Americas Engineering in Old Town, which designs and analyzes the primary structure – such as wings and fuselages – of Airbus commercial jets, including the A320.

Airbus announced plans for the plant in 2012 and broke ground the following year. The Toulouse, France-based company said it chose to build a U.S. final assembly plant for A320 Family aircraft because the U.S. is the world's largest single-aisle aircraft market. Most of the aircraft assembled in Mobile will be delivered to North American customers, Airbus said.

Major parts of A320 Family aircraft – such as fuselages and tails – are manufactured at Airbus plants overseas and will be transported by air or ship to Mobile – a port city – for final assembly.

The Mobile plant's first aircraft delivery is scheduled for 2016: an A321 for New York-based JetBlue, Airbus Americas spokeswoman Mary Anne Greczyn said in an e-mail to The Eagle on Friday.

The plant currently employs 250 people.

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