

Santa Rosa's Press Gazette

Whiting Aviation Park Master Plan hot off the press

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With the new Whiting Aviation Park master plan in hand, TEAM Santa Rosa Economic Development Council is working even harder now to attract aerospace and defense companies to become part of the Santa Rosa industrial landscape. Atkins presented the Santa Rosa County Commission with the plan earlier this fall, complete with renderings that showcase potential build outs like corporate offices, a hangar, taxiway and tarmac.

Located right here in Milton, the Whiting Aviation Park (WAP) is nestled between two well-known military bases: Pensacola Naval Air Station and Eglin Air Force Base. Whiting Aviation Park will give Northwest Florida and edge up in the aviation and defense recruitment arena and it will also bolster the allure of doing business as an industry in the entire State of Florida. Whiting Aviation Park's unique infrastructure, including the key marketing features of being located on heavy industrial zoned property, airspace buffered by NAS Whiting Field and adjacency to a State-protected forest, enhances the attractiveness of this site as a pro-business environment.

The completion of the master plan is a significant milestone for the development of this very unique asset in Santa Rosa County. With the completion of the plan, we now have a comprehensive body of site information that makes the park eligible for grant funding to be used for development. The information available in the plan includes data on airside facilities and support, security requirements, socio-economic assessments, capacity analysis of the field, utility needs, development phasing and cost analysis. These are all critical data that are essential components of viable grant proposals and for answering questions from prospective tenants of the park. With the master plan in hand, the park is a much more attractive prospect for a variety of funding opportunities including those from federal and state sources.

The completion of the master plan for the park brings us one step closer to transitioning this property into an aviation industrial center of activity for Northwest Florida- a park like no other in the nation. One that is referred to by the Department of the Navy as "The Santa Rosa Model."

Keeping Santa Rosa on the Radar

TEAM Santa Rosa Economic Development Council conducted a familiarization tour recently with a national leader in site location for large industry. TEAM was able to entice the visitor to make the trip here through his business relationship with Shannon Ogletree, TEAM Santa Rosa Economic Development Council's Associate Director and industry recruiter. Shannon initially met the consultant at an annual Florida's Great Northwest event called Focus, and has been building the relationship ever since.

During the visit, TEAM Santa Rosa Economic Development Council and the Pensacola Chamber's economic development staff showed a number of sites in both Santa Rosa and Escambia Counties and introduced him to all the amenities that two-county MSA (Metropolitan Statistical Area) has to offer. Communities around the nation try to get people like this to visit their area, and TEAM Santa Rosa Economic Development Council was able to put them on the ground here in the Pensacola MSA- a great win for the region.

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