

**NEWS RELEASE****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**GOV. EDWARDS, WESTERN GLOBAL AIRLINES ANNOUNCE SHREVEPORT PROJECT**

*At Shreveport Regional Airport, company will make \$3 million investment, create 170 direct jobs*

SHREVEPORT, La. — Today, Gov. John Bel Edwards and Western Global Airlines CEO and founder James K. Neff announced the company will establish an aircraft maintenance facility at Shreveport Regional Airport. A cargo freight carrier, Western Global will make a capital investment of \$3 million for tooling and equipment to support the 152,000-square-foot Hangar 40 at the airport. The company, which provides service to over 300 airports in 115 nations, selected Shreveport as a conveniently located and well-qualified hub for maintaining its fleet of 16 Boeing 747 and McDonnell Douglas MD-11 widebody freighter aircraft.

Based in Estero, Florida, near Fort Myers, Western Global Airlines ultimately will create 170 new direct jobs with an average annual salary of more than \$45,200, plus benefits. In addition, Louisiana Economic Development estimates the project will result in 308 new indirect jobs, for a total of more than 475 new jobs in Northwest Louisiana.

“In Louisiana, our aerospace industry continues to grow with manufacturers, maintenance and repair facilities, industrial air transport companies, and our flagship NASA manufacturing site at Michoud Assembly Facility in New Orleans,” Gov. Edwards said. “We’re excited to be bringing a company with the global reach of Western Global Airlines to Shreveport, where this project will boost the regional economy and provide compelling new career opportunities for our talented workforce.”

In Shreveport, Western Global will establish its own aircraft maintenance, repair and overhaul facility after outsourcing these functions at multiple locations in the past.

“Western Global is pleased to select Shreveport for its world wide aircraft heavy maintenance base.” Mr. Neff said. “Shreveport’s central location, abundant and competent workforce and state of the art large aircraft hangar makes it an ideal choice for WGA. We look forward to a very long term, mutually beneficial relationship with the City of Shreveport, the state of Louisiana and Louisiana Economic Development where we can grow together and make Shreveport a center for aircraft maintenance.”

Western Global Airlines will lease Hangar 40 from the Shreveport Airport Authority and occupy space formerly leased by ExpressJet Airlines. That space became available when ExpressJet announced in late 2016 that it would close some maintenance centers in the face of a consolidating commercial airline industry. ExpressJet moved its Shreveport operations to Knoxville, Tennessee, while retaining a smaller maintenance center in Baton Rouge. Several prospects were evaluated by the Shreveport Airport Authority in the past year before the selection of Western Global Airlines.

Western Global Airline’s lease with the Shreveport Airport Authority becomes effective today. The company will begin recruiting experienced and certified aircraft technicians immediately, with plans to hire an initial 50 employees this year. Over time, Western Global may elect to obtain additional FAA certification enabling it to perform maintenance, repair and overhaul work on third-party aircraft. During the next decade, Western Global will ramp up employment to 170 personnel.

“We are excited to have Western Global Airlines in this facility to help bring about economic growth to our city and region,” said Mayor Ollie Tyler. “This creates an opportunity to employ an experienced workforce that is already familiar with the type work that will take place in Hangar 40.”

“Hangar 40 has always played a major role here at the airport and we are happy to partner with and welcome Western Global Airlines to this renovated facility in Shreveport,” said Henry Thompson, Director of Airports. “The type of large aircraft that Western Global will be bringing into the airport will be something Shreveport has not seen in many years. We are thrilled Western Global chose Shreveport Regional Airport as their new maintenance base”

LED began discussions with Western Global Airlines about the Shreveport project earlier this year. To secure the project, the State of Louisiana offered the company a competitive incentive package that includes a \$1 million performance-based grant to offset the cost of improvements to Hangar 40. Western Global will receive the comprehensive workforce solutions of LED FastStart® — ranked as the No. 1 state workforce program in the nation. The company also is expected to utilize the state’s Quality Jobs Program.

#### **About Western Global Airlines**

Based in Florida, minutes from the Southwest Florida International Airport, Western Global is an FAA Part 121-Certified, all-cargo airline operating its owned fleet of B747-400 and MD-11 freighter airplanes worldwide for many of the top airlines, express companies, logistics providers, humanitarian and relief organizations, and the U.S. Department of Defense. In less than four years of operations, Western Global has flown to 315 airports in 115 countries on six continents. For more information, visit [WesternGlobalAirlines.com](http://WesternGlobalAirlines.com).

#### **About Shreveport Regional Airport**

Shreveport Regional Airport is the commercial carrier airport in Shreveport and serves residents in Louisiana, Texas and Arkansas. Opened on July 6, 1952, the airport expanded in 1971 to its current building and expanded again in 1999 with an all new central terminal building. Shreveport is served by four airlines: Allegiant with non-stop service to Las Vegas and Orlando, American Airlines with non-stop service to Charlotte and Dallas, Delta Air Lines with non-stop service to Atlanta, and United Airlines with non-stop service to Houston and Denver. For more information, visit [www.flyshreveport.com](http://www.flyshreveport.com)

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