

## **Media Advisory – June 3, 2010**

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### **Reardon, legislators open new aerospace training center**

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon, County Council members and other local, state and federal Congressional delegates opened the new Washington Aerospace Training and Research Center on Thursday at Paine Field.

Reardon led efforts last summer to establish a consortium of community colleges and educational facilities to create a new, statewide aerospace institute offering training, research and development.

At that time, the county offered the Aerospace Futures Alliance (AFA) a 30,000-square-foot facility at Paine Field Airport to be operated as a centralized training center. Since then, more than \$6 million in federal, state, local and private funds and donations has been dedicated toward improvements here and at a similar facility in Spokane.

More than 15,000 square feet at the Paine Field site has been renovated and installed with computer labs, training equipment and classroom space, including \$2.5 million in tools, materials and equipment from the Boeing Company.

“This new training center will allow us to remain successful in the highly competitive field of aerospace,” Reardon said. “We must continue to lead the change that ensures high-paying jobs and top-rate airplanes stay in Snohomish County and Washington state.”

The training center, with key oversight provided by Edmonds Community College, has the opportunity to provide short, hands-on, job-specific training to employees at the state’s 650 aerospace companies, which employ more than 120,000 workers. Classes begin next week.

“We needed a coordinated statewide training center to address the aerospace industry’s changing technical requirements and workforce needs. The Aerospace Futures Alliance, Aaron Reardon and leadership in Snohomish County made this center a priority,” said Larry Cluphf, the center’s director of operations. “Strong partnerships with county, state and at the national level, have made this industry driven center a reality.”

The Aerospace Futures Alliance will help connect the center’s activities to industry and advocate for additional resources as needed to aid in its success.

“We cannot stop here,” said Linda Lanham, executive director of the Aerospace Futures Alliance. “We must continue to fund training opportunities for our aerospace workforce and the companies they represent.”

Such an educational consortium allows for the rapid development of training programs that don't currently exist in Washington state but are needed to remain competitive in today's aerospace industry. Training also can be offered throughout the state at different colleges to suit the needs and locations of individual aerospace companies. A strong focus will be on "training the trainers," officials have said.

"With strong competition for future aerospace work, we owe it to the thousands of aerospace employees in our state to do everything we can to remain at the top of the field to keep future jobs in Washington," Reardon said.

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