

# Stewart Industries celebrates expansion

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Aviation spares supplier Stewart Industries held a ribbon cutting ceremony Friday morning at the Roswell International Air Center to celebrate a new hangar door and the expansion of services offered by the company's Roswell location.

The door will allow for more styles of aircraft to enter the hangar where Stewart Industries conducts aircraft maintenance work. The Roswell branch has also recently become certified by the Federal Aviation Administration to conduct heavy maintenance checks.

"It's huge," company owner Tom Stewart said of the greater capabilities. "Now there's not anything we can't do when it comes to maintenance on an airplane."

He said that the Roswell location is the only aircraft maintenance operation in New Mexico with such a breadth of services to offer.

Maintenance capabilities aren't the only things expanding at the airport; Stewart Industries now needs more hands on deck.

Stewart said the company will be hiring for 50 positions in the next 40 days, and that there is a plan to expand the entire aircraft industry in Roswell so as to add over



Tess Townsend Photo

The Roswell Red Coats watch as Stewart Industries founder Tom Stewart, far right, and Mayor Del Jurney cut the red ribbon stretched before a new door to a hangar used to house aircraft maintenance work.

1,200 jobs by 2020.

Mayor Del Jurney praised employees of Stewart Industries for making operations possible.

"You're the reason that planes are going to be coming in and out of this hangar to have work done," he said.

Speakers at the ceremony said the contributions of the Oklahoma-based company to the local economy would not be possible without city government officials, Stewart Industries and state economic planners working together.

"This is truly a joint effort," said Mark Roper,

who works for the Roswell office of the New Mexico Economic Development Office.

Stewart gave special praise to Jurney for his efforts.

"I've done this all over the country," Stewart said. "Never, not one time, have I ever dealt with someone like this guy."

He said he views the Roswell location as a worthy investment, due to the quality of amenities offered by the airport and the open space that surrounds it.

"Outside Roswell, you do not understand what an asset this is, what a

jewel this is," he said.

He said his company has already invested over \$400,000 into airport facilities, such as the hangar, in order to make expanded operations possible.

County commissioners, members of the Roswell Chamber of Commerce and the Roswell Red Coats also were present at the ribbon cutting, which took place between two jet engines.

Red Coats Captain Ed McClella called Stewart Industries a good employer.

"We're just tickled to death to have them here," he said.