

HondaJet was a project of the City of High Point and other local governments. Its campus is located on the grounds of Piedmont Triad International Airport, which is less than a mile from the High Point city limits.

Honda Aircraft Co. expects to hire 100 employees next year for its production facility

*By Fran Daniel
Winston-Salem Journal
July 13, 2011*

Honda Aircraft Co. said Tuesday that it expects to hire 100 employees next year for its new production facility, plus more in the following years for a total of about 300 new employees.

The company currently has about 600 employees.

With the recent completion of its production facility, Honda Aircraft is a step closer to having its light-business jet roll off the assembly line. The company hopes to build 70 to 100 of them annually for the next two to three years.

On Tuesday, the company showed off its manufacturing building and other operations on its 83-acre campus at Piedmont Triad International Airport during an open house for the media.

"This is a most exciting moment in the transition phase from R&D to production," said Michimasa Fujino, the president and chief executive of Honda Aircraft.

The production building has a large assembly area and paint booths. Equipment is expected to be moved in by early 2012. The first aircraft should be available for delivery by the end of next year.

"Customers are very excited to see the progress of the program," he said. "They know at the same time it is a commitment and investment for the future."

Fujino said that more than 100 customers, primarily private individuals and owners of small-to-medium companies, have said that they want the \$4.5 million jet.

The company expects to have all production equipment moved in by early 2012. The first HondaJet aircraft is expected to be ready for delivery by the end of next year.

The first HondaJet aircraft assembled and tested under the Federal Aviation Administration's certification process flew Dec. 20, 2010, in Greensboro. The company's second flight test model should be finished and ready for its first flight in late summer.

With the production facility, the Honda Aircraft campus now has three buildings. The headquarters has offices and a telemetry room, where specialists can remotely communicate with pilots and monitor and analyze test flights in real time.

"We have an open office environment," said Stephen Keeney, a spokesman for Honda Aircraft. "We don't have any offices. Even our president, Mr. Fujino, has a cubicle."

The company's research and development building has a variety of operations. It houses a design studio, an assembly area and a delivery center where customers will come to get their jets. Employees use large equipment to test for static strength and durability of aircrafts. There is also an integration test facility that provides full-flight simulation on the ground.

Fujino said that manufacturing the light jet is an important step for Honda Aircraft and its parent company, Honda Motor Co. He believes that the HondaJet aircraft brings new engineering and style, among other things, to the aviation industry.

"Honda Motor is a mobility company," he said. "It is our dream to get into aviation."

###