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MAMA Selects Chippewa County for New Command and Control Center *Upper Peninsula Community Is Third and Final Site In Michigan Launch Initiative*

Sterling Heights, Michigan, January 28, 2021 – The Michigan Aerospace Manufacturers Association, or MAMA, today announced the selection of Chippewa County in the state’s Upper Peninsula as the site of its new command and control center.

Chippewa was among four communities across the state considered for the command and control center. Site selection – co-led by spaceport consultants BRPH and Kimley-Horn – was based on many factors, including community support, constructability, existing communication infrastructure and established workforce and aerospace industry.

Chippewa was chosen as the third and final site in the Michigan Launch Initiative, a public-private partnership organized by MAMA that is expected to bring an estimated 40,000 new jobs and solidify the state’s place as a premier commercial aerospace destination. The new command and control center will enable the MLI to interface with the U.S. Department of Defense, or DOD, and other related agencies on highly sensitive and defense-related projects.

The Michigan Launch Initiative, or MLI, also includes a horizontal space launch site in Oscoda and a vertical space launch site in Marquette. Both sites were announced in 2020 as part of a yearlong selection process that included the command and control center.

The command and control center will support both launch sites and provide classified and unclassified capabilities for the DOD and commercial space organizations. It will manage satellite operations once rockets carrying small and mid-sized satellites are launched from the horizontal and vertical launch sites into low Earth orbit, or LEO, which is about 1,200 miles above the Earth. It also will manage research and development for high-speed suborbital flights.

“This large and contiguous site in Chippewa has existing facilities that can easily be converted to support the command and control center’s mission,” said MAMA Executive Director Gavin Brown. “It also has early radar line of sight tracking for the horizontal and vertical launch sites to support our Michigan Launch Initiative. The Chippewa community’s strong partnerships within the aerospace industry and its established aerospace labor market will allow for immediate support for the center.

“Upon future determination, a military aspect will be key in the MLI, enabling us to interface with the Department of Defense on projects that utilize satellites and other space assets. Michigan’s new launch sites and our evolving space ecosystem will help position our state to be a true leader. We are thrilled to welcome Chippewa to the MLI team.”

Now that the command and control center site has been selected, MAMA will work with community, local and state partners on environmental permitting, site design and construction.

“We are extremely pleased with and excited about the selection of Chippewa County for the command and control center location,” said Chippewa County Economic Development President Chris Olson. “Chippewa’s proposal provides an ideal balance of industry expertise, local know-how and national security space proficiency necessary for the successful implementation of a premier command and control center.”

The DOD plans to add 17,000 LEO satellites over the next decade – a significant increase over the 1,200 satellites currently there. Michigan’s new launch sites will help meet this demand while providing a multibillion dollar impact on the state’s economy.

The MLI is working to obtain licensing approvals for the Oscoda horizontal launch site and the Marquette vertical launch site. Operations are expected to begin at the horizontal space launch site in late 2023 or early 2024 and at the vertical space launch site by early 2025.

In June 2019, the Michigan Legislature appropriated \$2 million to assess the feasibility of developing one or more low-orbit launch sites in the state. Michigan is uniquely positioned to meet the demand for commercial, government and defense space launches. Specifically, Northern Michigan – north of the Earth’s 45th parallel – is perfectly situated for polar orbit launches and it has ideal infrastructure for logistics and technical support.

“These are exciting times in the space industry,” Brown said. “The space domain is critical to both our national security and economic viability. Space is a significant growth area for both the DOD and commercial sectors for the foreseeable future. We are honored to be leading this effort.”

ABOUT MAMA

Michigan Aerospace Manufacturers Association is a member-supported organization that serves the interests of Michigan’s aerospace and defense manufacturing firms with a single unified voice, promoting the state of Michigan’s aerospace and defense manufacturing community within the global industry. www.michman.org.

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