SHIELD AI SELECTS NEWTON CITY-COUNTY AIRPORT FOR FLIGHT TEST FACILITY

NEWTON, Kan. Oct. 28, 2025 – Harvey County Economic Development and the Greater Wichita Partnership are pleased to announce that Shield AI, a venture-backed defense-technology company, has selected the Newton City-County Airport as the site for a new flight test facility.

Shield AI develops autonomy software and aircraft that use artificial intelligence (AI) to protect service members and civilians in high-risk environments. The company's latest innovation, the X-BAT, is the world's first AI-piloted, vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) fighter jet.

"Shield AI is excited to partner with the Newton and Harvey County communities as we continue to advance autonomous aviation technologies," said Armor Harris, senior vice president of aircraft at Shield AI "The region's large aviation ecosystem, skilled workforce and strong public-private partnerships make south-central Kansas an ideal location for innovation."

Initial plans include leasing approximately 16,000 square feet of space and three acres of land for flight testing. This project has the potential to create 30 to 60 full-time jobs and nearly $1 million in infrastructure improvements over the next few years with the addition of a manufacturing facility.

This announcement represents a significant win for the region and follows years of collaboration and engagement, including introductions facilitated by U.S. Senator Jerry Moran.

"This announcement reinforces that Kansas is not only home to the Air Capital of the World, but also a center for the future of defense innovation," said U.S. Senator Jerry Moran. "Projects like this demonstrate how Kansas talent and infrastructure continue to play a vital role in strengthening our national security and advancing American leadership in aerospace."

Shield AI representatives met with state, regional and Partnership leaders at the past two international air shows. Subsequent meetings and tours across south-central Kansas, supported by the Kansas Department of Commerce, helped the company identify the Newton City-County Airport as the ideal location for this next phase of growth.

"This investment by Shield AI highlights how the greater Wichita region continues to attract world-class aerospace and defense leaders," said Jeff Fluhr, President of the Greater Wichita Partnership. "Our region's talent, infrastructure and collaborative ecosystem continue to strengthen our position as the Air Capital of the World, and as a hub for the next generation of flight."

"We are thrilled to welcome Shield AI to Harvey County," said Beth Shelton, Executive director of Harvey County Economic Development. "Their presence will create quality jobs, enhance our local economy and further position the Newton area as a strategic site for advanced aerospace technology."

The Newton City Commission and Harvey County Commission approved a lease agreement at the Newton City-County Airport for the project on Tuesday.

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About Harvey County Economic Development

Harvey County Economic Development is dedicated to the growth and advancement of Harvey County's economy. The organization strives to maintain economic health by supporting existing businesses and industries while continuing the recruitment of new industries. For more information, visit https://harveycoedc.org/.

About the Greater Wichita Partnership
The Greater Wichita Partnership is dedicated to fast-forwarding regional economic growth in Wichita and south-central Kansas. The organization works within three key priorities – jobs, talent and quality of place – to accelerate this objective. For more information, visit https://greaterwichitapartnership.org/home.