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Michigan: Ready to Serve as Mid-America’s Hypersonic Suborbital Test Range
*Michigan Aerospace Manufacturers Convenes Commercial, Academic, Defense Sector
to Address Growing Hypersonic Technology*

Sterling Heights, Michigan, January 10, 2022 – Michigan is uniquely positioned to address the new and trending advancement of hypersonic technology – and the Michigan Aerospace Manufacturers Association is convening organizations in the commercial, academic and defense sectors to do so by developing a hypersonic suborbital test range.

MAMA proposes developing a “hypersonic corridor” stretching from the Upper Peninsula out to the eastern seaboard that would give commercial and defense developers the opportunity to test hypersonic technology, which is designed for applications that travel at minimum speeds of Mach 5, or nearly 3,800 miles per hour at sea level.

The proposed Mid-America Hypersonic Suborbital Test Range initiative, or MAHSTR, would enable Michigan to be the epicenter of a new test range that will support hypersonic testing for sensors, aerostructures, cooling systems and other materials that travel at Mach 5 and above and serve as a crucial advancement in the race to establish the U.S. as a leader in hypersonic research and defense.

MAMA is working with eight of the Midwest’s leading research institutions, along with Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and the Air Force Research Laboratory in Dayton, Ohio as well as the Lightweight Innovation for Tomorrow, or LIFT, in Detroit to secure funding.

“Hypersonic technology has the opportunity to drastically change numerous applications such as commercial travel, supply chain and defense initiatives,” MAMA Executive Director Gavin Brown said. “The U.S. must keep pace with its competitors, such as Russia and China, that have already made key advancements. It’s critical for our country to continue the rapid development of its hypersonic technology to protect and enhance the American way of life.”

“We have the infrastructure, the open space, the manufacturing expertise and the talent to be successful. MAMA has already pioneered two critical programs to position Michigan as a leader in Mid-America’s space ecosystem with our Michigan Launch Initiative and Space-Enabled Communications for Advanced Mobility Research and Development Project. We remain committed to leading the nation’s hypersonic suborbital test range efforts with this proposed MAHSTR initiative.”

Brown noted several key factors that make Michigan an excellent location for a hypersonic suborbital test range, including:

- Critical infrastructure at Sawyer International Airport in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula and Oscoda-Wurtsmith Airport in Oscoda, which feature runways approximately 12,000 feet in length – long enough to accommodate aircraft needed for these tests.
- The largest amount of restricted airspace east of the Mississippi River with multiple military operating areas in the Great Lakes region.
- Central location in the Upper Midwest, which offers opportunities to locate facilities in areas with sparse population to create safe testing corridors.
- Convenient access and proximity to Wright-Patterson, LIFT and its eight research partners: Carnegie-Mellon University, Michigan State University, Michigan Technological University, Purdue University, The Ohio State University, University of Notre Dame, University of Michigan and Western Michigan University.
- The manufacturing prowess and technical expertise to be a leading space state with manufacturing-friendly tax laws and one of the most favorable business climates in the Midwest.
- More than 600 aerospace-related companies that produce more than \$3 billion in annual revenue, with the expectation of steady growth over the decade ahead.

“LIFT, together with our national ecosystem including Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, Carpenter and ATC, bring the expertise in material science, manufacturing processes that enables world-class engineering and manufacturing of next generation hypersonics,” said Nigel Francis, CEO and executive director of LIFT. “With the support of our Michigan Congressional leaders and the Department of Defense, LIFT is creating a hypersonic materials development center in our Detroit facility which will play a critical role in this initiative.”

MAHSTR is one of five major initiatives MAMA is working on. Its Michigan Launch Initiative, or MLI, is a public-private partnership working to solidify Michigan’s place as a premier commercial aerospace ecosystem. The MLI provides a collaborative platform for industry, government agencies and academic partners to support commercial and national security applications. It is dedicated to identifying and then creating three sites: horizontal and vertical launch facilities to provide low Earth orbit, or LEO, satellite launch sites and a command and control center to manage post-launch satellite operations.

MAMA is also working to position Michigan to take a leadership role in developing 5G Space-Enabled Communications for Advanced Mobility, or SECAM, for commercial and government users. The SECAM Research and Development Project convenes partners from the space industry, government and academia to share advancements in research and development for manufacturing, advanced intelligence, cybersecurity, advanced technology and other applications.

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. Visit michman.org for more information.

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