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Fayette County Development Authority Led Area D Acquisition Advances Major Aviation Expansion and U.S. Air Force Pilot Training at Falcon Field

More than 34 acres will be owned and managed by the Peachtree City Airport Authority, with signed leases supporting flight training and additional hangar development

PEACHTREE CITY, Ga. -August 21- A collaborative effort led by the Fayette County Development Authority (FCDA) has secured more than 34 acres of strategically important property known as “Area D” at Atlanta Regional Airport – Falcon Field, positioning the airport for significant aviation-related development and supporting the expansion of US Aviation Academy’s flight-training operations in Peachtree City.

FCDA facilitated the acquisition and coordinated the complex transaction in partnership with the Peachtree City Airport Authority (PCAA) and with the cooperation and support of the Peachtree City Mayor and City Council and the Fayette County Board of Commissioners.

Upon completion of the transaction, the Peachtree City Airport Authority will own and manage the 34-plus-acre Area D property, ensuring the land remains under airport stewardship and is available to support aviation-related uses for generations to come.

The acquisition is already creating opportunities for new investment. Leases have been signed for development within Area D that will support a flight school and additional hangar space, creating an expanded aviation footprint at Falcon Field.

The announcement comes as US Aviation Academy expands its operations in Peachtree City and prepares to provide initial flight training for future United States Air Force pilots.

US Aviation Academy was awarded a 10-year U.S. Air Force contract valued at up to \$835 million to provide Initial Pilot Training, with Peachtree City identified as one of the locations supporting the program. The expansion will bring additional flight-training capacity, aviation infrastructure and activity to Falcon Field.

“This is exactly the kind of outcome that demonstrates what can happen when organizations put the long-term interests of the community first,” said Darryl A. Hicks, Chairman of the Fayette County Development Authority. “FCDA recognized Area D not simply as a land transaction, but as a strategic opportunity to strengthen Falcon Field and create new aviation investment in Fayette County. Our team worked diligently to assemble the pieces, coordinate the partners and develop a structure that could move this property into airport ownership. Seeing that work now translate into signed leases, expanded aviation infrastructure and the training of future United States Air Force pilots is an extraordinary outcome.”

Hicks said the project illustrates an important, but sometimes less visible role of economic development organizations.

“Some of the most important economic development work happens long before a ribbon cutting,” Hicks said. “It is assembling property, solving problems, structuring transactions and bringing the right partners to the table. Area D is a tremendous example of that work, and FCDA is proud to have helped make this investment in the future of Falcon Field possible.”

Securing Area D for the Future of Falcon Field

The acquisition places more than 34 acres of strategically located property under the ownership and management of the Peachtree City Airport Authority.

Ken Fleming, Chairman of the Peachtree City Airport Authority, said securing the property represents an important milestone for the airport.

“Area D is critically important to the long-term future of Atlanta Regional Airport - Falcon Field,” Fleming said. “Bringing these 34-plus acres under Airport Authority ownership gives us the ability to manage the property as part of a comprehensive aviation strategy and ensure that its development strengthens the airport.”

Fleming credited FCDA with helping overcome the complexities necessary to reach a successful outcome.

“We are tremendously appreciative of FCDA and its leadership in the purchase and coordination of Area D,” Fleming said. “This was a complicated transaction requiring persistence, creativity and cooperation among multiple entities. FCDA provided the leadership necessary to move it forward, while Peachtree City and Fayette County worked with us toward a solution that ultimately benefits the airport and the entire community.”

For Aviation Director Hope Macaluso, the acquisition represents both a long-term planning opportunity and an immediate operational benefit.

“Adding more than 34 acres to the property owned and managed by the Airport Authority gives us an opportunity that airports rarely have; that is the ability to thoughtfully plan a significant piece of aviation property for future generations,” said Hope Macaluso, Aviation Director for Atlanta Regional Airport – Falcon Field. “Even more exciting is that this development is already moving forward. With leases in place for flight-training operations and additional hangar space, Area D will expand the services and capabilities available at Falcon Field while supporting our continued growth as a premier general aviation airport.”

Macaluso said the combination of land, infrastructure and aviation users provides the Airport Authority an opportunity to develop Area D as an integrated extension of Falcon Field.

“The goal is not simply to develop acreage,” Macaluso said. “It is to develop it well, with aviation uses that complement the airport, serve our pilots and tenants, and position Falcon Field for the future.”

Training the Next Generation of Air Force Pilots

A major component of that future will be the continued expansion of US Aviation Academy.

The Academy is expanding its flight school presence at Falcon Field as it prepares to support Initial Pilot Training for the United States Air Force, providing foundational flight training for future military aviators.

Peachtree City is among the locations selected by US Aviation Academy to support its 10-year Air Force training contract. The program is expected to increase flight-training operations and strengthen Falcon Field’s growing role in professional aviation education.

Niki Vanderslice, President & CEO of the Fayette County Development Authority, said the opportunity illustrates why protecting strategic assets can be just as important as recruiting individual projects.

“Economic development is ultimately about creating the environment where investment can happen,” Vanderslice said. “In this case, we had an irreplaceable aviation asset, a growing airport and an opportunity to put more than 34 acres into the hands of the entity best positioned to manage it for the long term. FCDA was able to serve as the connector - bringing together the Airport Authority, Peachtree City, Fayette County and the private sector to move from opportunity to execution.”

Vanderslice said the US Aviation Academy expansion gives the project additional significance.

“There is something meaningful about knowing that future Air Force pilots will receive their initial flight training here in Fayette County,” Vanderslice said. “This is more than an economic development project. It connects aviation, workforce development and service to our country in a way that is uniquely appropriate for Falcon Field. It also demonstrates that preserving land for the right use can generate economic benefits and opportunities far beyond the acreage itself.”

Local and Federal Partnerships

The Area D project builds upon significant public investment and cooperation surrounding the future of Falcon Field.

The Federal Aviation Administration has committed nearly \$10 million toward construction of a new air traffic control tower at Falcon Field, following advocacy by Congressman Brian Jack in support of the Peachtree City Airport Authority and the project.

Congressman Jack said the investments underway at Falcon Field demonstrate the airport's importance not only to the local community, but to the broader aviation system and national defense.

Macaluso said Congressman Jack's advocacy with the FAA has been especially important during a period of increasing activity at the airport.

"Congressman Jack has been a tremendous advocate for Falcon Field," Macaluso said. "His leadership and support with the FAA helped advance the new air traffic control tower, which will be essential as our operations continue to grow. That federal partnership, combined with the acquisition and development of Area D, allows us to plan for increased aviation activity with both safety and long-term sustainability in mind."

A Community Partnership

Peachtree City Mayor Kim Learnard said the outcome reflects the community's longstanding commitment to Falcon Field.

"Falcon Field is an important part of Peachtree City's identity, and this represents a tremendous opportunity to strengthen an asset our community has invested in for decades," Learnard said. "Area D will remain in the stewardship of the Airport Authority while supporting aviation uses that fit naturally with Falcon Field. I appreciate FCDA, the Airport Authority, City Council, Fayette County and Congressman Jack for working together to achieve an outcome that positions the airport for continued success."

Learnard said the US Aviation Academy expansion adds another reason for the community to celebrate.

"To know that future United States Air Force pilots will receive part of their initial training right here in Peachtree City is a tremendous point of pride," Learnard said. "It speaks to the quality of Falcon Field and the aviation community that has developed around it."

Fayette County Board of Commissioners Chairman Lee Hearn said the project demonstrates the benefits of cooperation across jurisdictional lines.

"Falcon Field may be located in Peachtree City, but its importance and economic impact extend throughout Fayette County," Hearn said. "The Board of Commissioners was pleased to work with the City, Airport Authority and FCDA toward a successful outcome for Area D. This project protects an important asset, creates opportunities for investment and strengthens Fayette County's position in aviation."

From Land Acquisition to Active Development

The Area D acquisition is notable not only because of the property being secured, but because development plans are already advancing.

Leases have been signed supporting: A flight school and expanded flight-training operations; Development of a fuel farm to enhance airport fueling infrastructure; and Construction of additional hangar space to accommodate aviation demand and future growth.

Together, those projects will expand Falcon Field's aviation ecosystem while ensuring that the property remains dedicated to uses compatible with the airport.

US Aviation Academy's Peachtree City expansion will be a significant part of that activity.

"We are honored to have the opportunity to prepare the next generation of United States Air Force pilots, and Peachtree City will play an important role in that mission," said Mike Sykes, CEO of US Aviation Academy. "Falcon Field provides an exceptional environment for professional flight training, and the support we have received from the Airport Authority, FCDA and the community has allowed us to continue investing and growing here. We look forward to expanding our footprint and building an aviation training operation that Peachtree City and Fayette County can be proud of."

Building the Next Chapter of Falcon Field

Together, the Area D acquisition, signed aviation leases, US Aviation Academy expansion and new FAA-supported air traffic control tower represent a significant period of investment in Atlanta Regional Airport - Falcon Field.

The partnership brings together local, county and federal leadership: FCDA facilitating the acquisition and coordinating the transaction; PCAA assuming ownership and long-term management of Area D; Peachtree City and Fayette County supporting a successful local solution; Congressman Jack advocating for critical federal aviation infrastructure; and private-sector aviation partners investing in new facilities and operations.

"This project is a model for how economic development should work," Vanderslice said. "FCDA does not need to own Area D for FCDA to have accomplished its mission. Success is putting the asset in the right hands, creating the conditions for private investment and making sure the community benefits for years to come. The Airport Authority is the right long-term steward for this property, and we are excited to see what comes next."

About the Peachtree City Airport Authority

The Peachtree City Airport Authority owns and operates Atlanta Regional Airport - Falcon Field (KFFC) in Peachtree City, Georgia. The Authority is responsible for the operation, development and long-term stewardship of the airport and its aviation assets.

About the Fayette County Development Authority

The Fayette County Development Authority (FCDA) works to support responsible economic development, investment and job creation throughout Fayette County. FCDA partners with

businesses, property owners, municipalities, Fayette County and other organizations to facilitate projects and strategic investments that strengthen Fayette County's economy and quality of life.

About US Aviation Academy

US Aviation Academy provides professional pilot, aircraft technician and aviation training programs at locations across the United States. The Academy provides civilian and government aviation training and has been awarded a 10-year contract valued at up to \$835 million to provide Initial Pilot Training for the United States Air Force.

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