

Aeronautical university to help plan Atlantic County aviation academy

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Atlantic County officials announced Tuesday that a leading aeronautical university has agreed to partner with them to help plan a county aviation maintenance and technical academy.

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University will develop an operational plan that will include recommendations for the location of the academy, design concepts, an educational curriculum and a strategy for operations and sustainability, according to a press release.

The county was awarded a \$120,000 Innovation Challenge grant from the New Jersey Economic Development Authority to develop the plan, according to the release.

“Embry-Riddle is considered to be the finest aeronautical university in the world,” county Executive Dennis Levinson said in the press release. “We are pleased that they recognize the opportunities our area offers in aviation, and we hope this project leads to additional areas of collaboration at the National Aviation Research and Technology Park such as Smart Airport initiatives and STEM education.”

Embry-Riddle will also work closely with Atlantic Cape Community College, which operates an aviation program and is a partner in the grant, officials said.

“A key goal of the proposed Atlantic County academy is to help broaden and diversify the regional economy to facilitate development of an aviation economic hub centered around the FAA Tech Center, the Atlantic City Airport and the National Aviation Research and Technology Park,” Lauren Moore, executive director of the Atlantic County Economic Alliance, said in the release.

According to Levinson, an Aviation Maintenance and Technical Academy would also offer workforce development opportunities.

“The skill sets that are learned at the academy would be transferable to the repair and maintenance of wind energy turbines. This would be critical to meeting the state’s plans to develop offshore wind energy, which will also need skilled workers.”

According to the release, the Economic Alliance is working closely with the South Jersey Transportation Authority to assist with its efforts to develop air cargo and aircraft maintenance and repair operations at the airport.

Officials said the success of these operations will depend on the availability of a skilled workforce and that the academy is intended to help meet that need.

The development of air cargo and maintenance and repair operations in Atlantic County was a recommendation in the Atlantic County Economic Development Strategy prepared by AngelouEconomics in 2015.

The Economic Alliance was vested with the responsibility of implementing the strategy, officials said.