



AV Expands Huntsville Facility to Accelerate Production of Next-Generation Freedom Eagle-1 Interceptor

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Facility expansion positions AV to scale production, accelerate fielding, and provide cost-effective defense against mass aerial threats

ARLINGTON, Va.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--May 26, 2026-- AeroVironment, Inc. ("AV") (NASDAQ: AVAV), a global defense technology leader, today announced an additional government investment of \$20.2 million in AV's Huntsville, Alabama facility to increase quantities of Low-Rate Initial Production (LRIP) and accelerate future Full-Rate Production (FRP) of the Next-Generation Counter-Unmanned Aircraft System Missile (NGCM), known as Freedom Eagle-1 (FE-1).

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Freedom Eagle-1, AV's next-generation interceptor, supports scalable, cost-effective defense against mass aerial threats as Huntsville expansion accelerates production and fielding. (Photo: AV)

The expanded site will serve as the system-level integration, manufacturing, and production hub for FE-1, enabling rapid scale-up of interceptor production and accelerated delivery timelines to meet urgent U.S. Army and Combatant Command operational needs.

The 24,000-square-foot expansion and associated job growth in Huntsville reflect AV's continued investment in meeting evolving national security demands for subsonic missiles while strengthening cost-effective production capacity, driving innovation, and supporting on-time delivery.

"Growing our presence in Huntsville places AV more firmly at the center of the Army's air and missile defense ecosystem, enabling tighter integration, faster iteration, and more efficient production at scale," said Wahid Nawabi, Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer at AV. "That proximity is critical as we begin production of Freedom Eagle-1, a system designed to deliver a scalable, cost-effective response to increasingly complex and high-volume aerial threats."

The investment builds on [AV's recent selection and \\$95.9 million contract award](#) under the U.S. Army's NGCM and Long-Range Kinetic Interceptor (LRKI) programs, executed through the U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command Aviation & Missile Center (CCDC AvMC) and the Aviation & Missile Technology Consortium (AMTC), and marks the next phase in transitioning Freedom Eagle-1 from development to scaled production and operational fielding.

In March, [AV announced a \\$97 million contract](#) to design and integrate prototype test environments for next-generation missile defense sensor testing at Redstone Arsenal — a Huntsville-based federal center that is home to more than 70 organizations, including NASA, the FBI, Missile Defense Agency, Army Program Acquisition Executive Fires, and the future U.S. Space Command headquarters.

"This expansion is a critical step in scaling production of Freedom Eagle-1 and accelerating its delivery to the field," said Jimmy Jenkins, Executive Vice President of AV's Precision Strike and Defense Systems Group. "By increasing manufacturing capacity, strengthening integration, and enabling production at volume, we're delivering a cost-effective interceptor designed to counter increasingly complex and high-volume aerial threats."

[Freedom Eagle-1](#) is designed to address these challenges with a combination of performance and affordability. The system is a low-cost, high-performance interceptor capable of neutralizing Groups 2 and 3 UAS while maintaining residual capability against Group 1 UAS, fixed-wing, and rotary-wing aircraft, with increased lethality, extended range, and rapid launch capabilities.

The system has achieved several key development milestones, [including a successful live-fire demonstration](#) of its dual-thrust solid rocket motor, controlled test vehicle launches, and warhead testing, demonstrating technical maturity and reduced risk as the program transitions toward field deployment.

"As the nation's defense and security demands increase, it is crucial that we meet capability needs, and there is no better place for AV's expansion as Alabama continues to lead in defense manufacturing and innovation," said Congressman Robert Aderholt (AL-04).

The expansion in Huntsville also reflects AV's broader strategy to scale domestic manufacturing capacity, following a [recent announcement of a \\$30 million expansion](#) of its Albuquerque, New Mexico campus, a move that is expected to generate more than \$670 million in economic impact over the next decade, create more than 450 high-wage jobs, and boost production of mission-critical defense and space technologies.

About AV

AeroVironment ("AV") (NASDAQ: AVAV) is a defense technology leader delivering integrated capabilities across air, land, sea, space, and cyber. The Company develops and deploys autonomous systems, loitering munitions, counter-UAS technologies, space-based platforms, directed energy systems, and cyber and electronic warfare capabilities—built to meet the mission needs of today's warfighter and tomorrow's conflicts. At the core of these technologies lies AV_Halo™, a modular, mission-ready suite of AI-powered software tools that empowers warfighters and enables full-battlefield dominance: detect, decide, deliver. With a national manufacturing footprint and a deep innovation pipeline, AV delivers proven systems and future-defining capabilities at speed, scale, and operational relevance. For more information, visit www.avinc.com.

Safe Harbor Statement

Certain statements in this press release may constitute "forward-looking statements" as defined in the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These statements are based on current expectations, forecasts, and assumptions that involve risks and uncertainties, which could cause actual

results to differ materially. Factors that may cause such differences include, but are not limited to, our ability to perform under existing contracts and obtain new ones; regulatory changes; competitor activities; market growth; product development challenges; and general economic conditions. For a more detailed discussion of these risks, please refer to AeroVironment's filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission. We undertake no obligation to update forward-looking statements as a result of new information or future events.

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