

## WSU News

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# Boeing 777-300ER Freighter Conversion Program achieves significant FAA milestone

By Strategic Communications



Wichita State University and Kansas Modification Center (KMC) have reached another significant milestone to advance the passenger-to-freighter aircraft conversion of the Boeing 777-300ER aircraft at WSU's National Institute for Aviation Research (NIAR) WERX.

KMC, a Wichita-based startup and NIAR WERX submitted a Certification Plan for the Supplemental Type Certificate (STC) to the FAA – moving the program one step closer to delivery of the modified aircraft to its owner.

As part of the conversion program announced in September 2020, KMC and NIAR WERX have been focused on pulling together the needed capital investment, market data, engineer development and workforce skills to be able to take delivery of their first aircraft.

“We are beyond proud of the work that has been accomplished,” said Dave Jones, executive director of NIAR WERX. “The filing of this Certification Plan is the product of a joint effort of among 80+ engineers, which has spanned thousands of hours of work and cost millions of dollars.”

“Aircraft conversion is not a new idea nor a new venture for Wichita’s aerospace industry,” said Jim Gibbs, President and CEO of KMC. “The strong, experienced local workforce and worldwide growing demand for freighter delivery services, attributed in part to the COVID pandemic, make this a logical venture for KMC and NIAR WERX.”

To reach this latest milestone, NIAR WERX leveraged its FAA experience to validate the Certification Plan by nineteen FAA Delegated Engineering Representatives (DERs). The FAA has already issued the project number and assigned a FAA project team, signaling their commitment to the project.

“I cannot understate the outstanding support and engagement we have received from the FAA and their delegates over the last 6 months,” said Gibbs.

With preliminary design 60% complete, NIAR WERX and KMC expect the STC issuance and initial re-delivery of the 777-300ERCF converted freighter in early 2024. Based on strong interest in the program, expansion is anticipated.