

## WSU News

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# 777 Freighter conversion program completes first flight tests

By WSU Strategic Communications



**A 777 Freighter takes flight — the first test flight of the new NIAR WERX passenger-to-freighter conversion program at Wichita State University.**

WERX at Wichita State University's National Institute for Aviation Research has completed the first pre-modification baseline test flight for the Kansas Modification Center's 777-300ERCF passenger-to-freighter conversion program April 26.

The flight is the first in a series of flight tests scheduled to take place at Air Capital Flight Line over the next several weeks.

The three-hour flight, piloted by NIAR WERX test pilots Doug Benjamin and Jerry Whites, was conducted to capture data on the aircraft's systems, which will be used to develop and certify the freighter modifications. Subsequent flights will measure the effects of various flight maneuvers and landing loads, as well as other aircraft systems performance.

Last week, the State of Kansas approved \$35 million in matching funds over the next five years for workforce and economic development through Wichita State's NIAR WERX Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) program. Also last week, Kansas-based Dynamic NC produced the first structural replacement parts for the conversion program, including a 230-inch aluminum floor beam and a side frame.

"I am excited for the speed at which the NIAR WERX team has progressed the test program and for the positive engagement we've experienced from the FAA – including active involvement of the Wichita FAA offices and the recent visit from FAA Deputy Administrator Bradley Mims," said KMC president and CEO Jim Gibbs. "The team is functioning at a high level of efficiency."