

JobsOhio at Farnborough International Airshow 2026

By J.P Nauseef, JobsOhio President & CEO

Farnborough 2026: The Bottleneck Isn't Money. It's Manufacturing

The JobsOhio team left Farnborough this year more convinced than ever that America's rearmament will be decided on factory floors, not in budget hearings.

The Pentagon's FY27 request is \$1.5 trillion — a 42% year-over-year increase, including more than \$70 billion for drones and counter-drone systems and a plan to field over 200,000 low-cost drones by 2027. The urgency is real. Wargames of a Pacific conflict show the U.S. exhausting critical munitions in two weeks or less. Ukraine and Iran already proved the lesson: modern conflict is won by producing capable systems at speed and scale.

That was the premise of the panel I moderated at the show, “Built for Speed: How America Is Accelerating Defence Production,” with Linden Blue of General Atomics, Amy Gowder of GE Aerospace and Marc Allen of Electra. The consensus was blunt. Capital and demand are abundant. What's scarce is floor space, power, skilled workers, qualified suppliers and permits. Program timelines now turn on how quickly a site moves from dirt to delivery - a location decision as much as an engineering one.

Ohio is where that thesis is being tested. We announced two projects during Farnborough. Electra selected AirPark Ohio, adjacent to Springfield-Beckley Municipal Airport, for an \$850 million campus, creating 1,975 jobs and building up to 800 EL9 Ultra Short aircraft a year at full capacity. Beehive Industries is investing \$70 million and creating more than 200 jobs in Southwest Ohio to scale 3D-printed jet engines —the additive approach that compresses propulsion timelines from years to months.

They join good company. Anduril's Arsenal-1 near Columbus went from groundbreaking to production-ready ahead of schedule, with Fury production underway since March. Hawthorn Aero is adding a 150,000-square-foot campus and 279 jobs in Miamisburg. Ukraine's battle-tested F-Drones chose northwest Ohio for its first U.S. manufacturing center after winning a Pentagon contract. Sierra Nevada Corporation selected Dayton over sites across the country. Resonant Sciences just opened a radome facility in Greene County, and GE Aerospace is investing more than \$100 million across its Southwest Ohio operations this year alone.

None of these are incentives-shopping stories. They are speed stories. Companies come here because Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and the Air Force Research Laboratory, NASA Glenn, the National Advanced Air Mobility Center of Excellence and a supply chain of more than 640 aerospace and defense firms let them dream it, build it, test it and scale it in one place.

CNBC named Ohio its No. 1 State for Business in 2026, with A+ grades in infrastructure and cost of doing business, the two most heavily weighted categories. That ranking is a lagging indicator of decisions manufacturers have already made.

The production capacity gap is real. Closing it requires places built to move fast. That work is underway in Ohio.



Post-Show Briefs