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Eastford manufacturer signs 'milestone' contract with Pratt & Whitney

By Ryan Blessing

An Eastern Connecticut manufacturer has signed a 10-year, \$234 million contract to supply parts to Pratt & Whitney for a new class of aircraft jet engines.

The Whitcraft Group in Eastford will supply United Technologies' Pratt & Whitney division for its PurePower Geared Turbofan engine family, the company announced Tuesday.

"This is a significant milestone for our company," Whitcraft Chief Executive Officer Colin Cooper said. "Companies all over the world are competing to be suppliers to this game-changing engine program."

Cooper said Pratt & Whitney has done more than 14,000 hours of testing, including more than 2,600 hours of flight testing and 27,000 cycles of testing on the engines.

Cooper said sheet metal components and assemblies will be produced at its Whitcraft facility in Eastford, and precision machined parts and assemblies will be made at its Connecticut Tool facility in Plainville and its Dell Manufacturing facility, in Farmington.

"All three of our Connecticut facilities will play critical roles in fulfilling our obligations under this contract," Cooper said.

With peak production set for 2020, the new contract is projected to total more than \$30 million per year of revenue for the Whitcraft Group, according to Stephen Lindsey, Whitcraft's director of sales.

In anticipation of entering into the agreement, the Whitcraft Group already has hired more than 30 new employees in the past two months, officials said. It's also in contact with schools statewide to train employees that will be involved in the program.

David Emmerling, vice president of strategic sourcing for Pratt & Whitney, said the agreement includes UTC's One Company terms and conditions, which allows for future collaboration through common contracting between Whitcraft and UTC.