

## Classes coming for Honda jet plant

### *Community college accepting applications for training*

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Honda Aircraft says its jet will be much more roomy and fuel-efficient.

(AP File Photo)

[www.cfnc.org](http://www.cfnc.org)

The start of construction on an executive-jet assembly plant in Greensboro is months away.

But officials at Guilford Technical Community College said yesterday that there's no time to waste for Triad residents wanting to be in the first wave of employees building those jets for Honda Aircraft Co. Inc.

GTCC is accepting applications for the two-year program, which will start in August. The program will train students to work on the airframes and power plants of the jets.

Applications can be obtained at [www.gtcc.edu](http://www.gtcc.edu), at [www.cfnc.org](http://www.cfnc.org) and click on the link for GTCC, or by going to any GTCC campus.

Ed Frye, the chairman of GTCC's Transportation Division, said that competition will be tight for the 25 slots in each class and that there is already statewide interest in the program.

Although a deadline has not been set, Frye encourages potential students to apply now. The classes will be taught at GTCC's aviation school at Piedmont Triad International Airport.

"Successful applicants will have to pass a college-entrance exam and demonstrate writing, math and communication skills," Frye said. Applicants will also be screened by local officials at JobLink and the N.C. Employment Security Commission before being accepted.

Honda Aircraft, a division of Honda Motor Co. in Japan, said Feb. 9 that it will build a 215,000-square-foot office and hangar and a separate plant for assembling small executive jets at the airport.

Honda also plans to build an engine plant in the Triad.

It is expected to invest at least \$100 million in the overall project and create at least 283 full-time jobs over the next five years that pay an average of \$70,000 a year. The pay for the airframe and power-plant jobs is expected to start at about \$12.50 an hour.

The cost and time demands of the job training could deter some potential applicants, Frye said.

The year-round program will cost about \$750 a semester, he said. The two classes will be offered Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. and from 5 to 10 p.m. At 96 credit hours, Frye said, it would be the "largest credit-hour program" at GTCC.

"This is definitely not a course where people can blow off attending classes and get an FAA license," Frye said. "Anyone missing 10 percent of class time would have to start over again since at least 60 percent of the class time is hands-on."

GTCC will provide training for specific duties at the Honda plant, such as aviation maintenance, hydraulics, electrical and landing gears. Those classes will take between 12 and 18 months to complete, and students will get Federal Aviation Administration certification, Frye said.

He said that the bulk of the production employees will get this kind of training.

"The difference in the training is that those who complete the airframe and power-plant program will be trained to work on pretty much any part of the airplane's body and engine," Frye said. "They will also gain the expertise to be considered for supervisory positions."

The new headquarters is expected to be open by November.

Although the jets require federal approval before production can begin, Honda Aircraft expects to begin deliveries in 2010 and expects to build at least 70 a year.

Honda is eligible for up to \$6.7 million in state incentives and a combined \$1.3 million in incentives from the Greensboro and High Point city councils and the Guilford County Board of Commissioners.

The project is considered precedent-setting by some local economic developers because it includes up to \$100,000 in cash from the Winston-Salem Alliance, a nonprofit economic-development group.

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