

Airstream Credits Strong Growth to Ohio's Talented Workers

In February 2018, Airstream announced plans for its largest-ever plant expansion. The \$40 million project will almost triple production space from 430,000 square feet to 1.05 million square feet and create 300 new jobs. It will allow the company to consolidate multiple production spaces into one facility, bringing the assembly of its travel trailers under one roof. It also will make more room to produce its touring coaches and growing line of other recreational vehicle products.

COMPANY PROFILE

Airstream, maker of the iconic "silver bullet" travel trailers, got its start in California in the 1930s. By 1952, the company had outgrown its Los Angeles facility. Wanting to expand in the Midwest, Airstream founder Wally Byam purchased a factory in Jackson Center, about an hour north of Dayton. The company has been making its hand-riveted, aluminum travel trailers in Ohio ever since. In the late 1970s, Airstream closed its California plant, making Jackson Center the company's only location.

BUSINESS NEED

Airstream's tremendous growth in the past few years has required three expansions – in addition to the latest one – since 2014. To keep up with that growth, Airstream needed dedicated, hard-working associates who are committed to quality work. Every Airstream travel trailer is handcrafted from the wheels up by skilled craftspeople, with more than 4,000 rivets installed by hand.

OHIO SOLUTIONS

Since it first came to Jackson Center in 1952, Airstream has been pleased with the quality of the workers it finds in western Ohio. Bob Wheeler, president and CEO of Airstream, said, "There's a dedication to craftsmanship and quality. People understand hard work, they understand loyalty, they understand what it is to be part of something bigger than themselves. You don't find that just anywhere, and we find it in droves in western and central Ohio. Airstream has thrived here in Ohio."

The company employs about 900 associates, and that number is expected to grow to 1,200 once the latest expansion is finished in 2019.

PROJECT STATS

- **Location:** Jackson Center
- **Total capital investment:** \$51.25 million
- **Jobs committed:** 635
- **Jobs retained:** 2,751
- **Facility specs:** 1.05 million square feet
- **Collaborators:** Sidney-Shelby Economic Partnership, Sidney-Shelby Chamber of Commerce, Dayton Development Coalition and JobsOhio

"This company is almost 90 years old, and its best years are ahead of it. We are growing steadily right now. We have access to the number one resource we need to build Airstreams, and that's people."

Bob Wheeler, president and CEO



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