

Airbus boosts US footprint with new A220 plant in Alabama

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Airbus is expanding its US presence with a new assembly plant in Alabama, its second in the southern state

European aircraft manufacturer Airbus on Wednesday broke ground on its second assembly line in the southern US state of Alabama, where it

plans to build its small A220 jets, as it seeks to swipe market share from rival Boeing.

"We continue to grow," Airbus Americas CEO Jeff Knittel said at the ceremony in Mobile, where the company already opened a plant in 2015 for building its A320 passenger jet.

Now, more than 1,500 of our planes are flying in the US," he added.

Production at the \$300 million plant is expected to begin in the third quarter of this year, with the first delivery of an A220 set for 2020. The facility expects eventually to put out four of the [aircraft](#) a month.

Airbus says it generated \$48 billion in aircraft- and space-related expenditures in the US in 2017, supporting more than 275,000 jobs.

"We are not in [competition](#) with the United States—we're in competition in the United States," Knittel said.

In 2017, Airbus acquired the A220-300 aircraft line, which Canadian firm Bombardier had developed as its CSeries, and which represents a new generation designed for airlines seeking 100-150 seat planes.

Bombardier had struggled to win customers even though the planes offered fuel savings similar to that of a new class of larger aircraft sold by Airbus and Boeing.

The A220's seating capacity falls between that of traditional commuter planes and the Airbus A320 family, which can seat from 180 to 240 people and which has become an airline workhorse on medium-range routes.

"The largest market for the A220 is the US," Knittel said.

"We're talking to a number of airlines and I am very optimistic about those discussions," he added, without offering further details.

Airbus already produces 4.5 A320s a month at its other Alabama site, and hopes to boost that number to five a month.

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