



## 10 YEARS IN BUSINESS - BLACKHAWK AEROSPACE COMPOSITES

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**Blackhawk Aerospace Composites celebrated their tenth year in business! The Kentucky-based company was established September 17, 2009 and manufactures aftermarket composite components for the business and military aviation markets as well as provides research and development services for several Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) and Department of Defense (DOD) companies. BAC's first project was an all-composite aftermarket Cessna Caravan engine cowling created to support BAU's (then Blackhawk Modifications) XP42A Engine+ Upgrade. The carbon-fiber composite cowling provided more room for the larger engine as well as weight savings for the upgrade. Over the past ten years, the company has continued to expand their capabilities and take on more diversified programs.**

"We've seen significant growth at BAC over the last ten years," said Kaylah West, the Company's General Manager. "It's amazing to think that we started as a company of just four people and have evolved into a team of almost 20 with full design, prototype, and manufacturing capabilities." BAC's competencies include autoclave processing, out of autoclave processing, and Vacuum Assisted Resin Transfer Molding (VARTM). These processes enable BAC to manufacture

components which are made of the lightest and strongest materials available. Components include secondary flight structures such as cowlings, fairings, winglets, aerodynamic enhancements, and more.



BAC was recently contracted by Bell to build ducts for their Nexus 4EX air taxi mockup, which was on display at the Consumer Electronics Show in Vegas last month. BAC engineered and manufactured the four complete duct assemblies including the outer duct rings, center cowling, vanes, control surfaces, and spinners and propellers. They were able to create a high temperature, dimensionally stable, and cost-effective tooling solution to manufacture these parts for the full-size mockup.

Moving forward, BAC will expand their capabilities to include rotor blade manufacturing, design support, Non-Destructive Testing (NDT) services, and metal component fabrication on their large five-axis machining center, which provides the ability to machine metal and composite components bringing projects in-house that were once outsourced.

“Over the past ten years, we’ve really become a one-stop-shop for all things composites manufacturing,” said Bill Smrtic, BAC’s Manufacturing Manager. “We’re able to provide design support, prototype, build, and certify composite components quickly and cost-effectively to increase performance, strength, and payload while reducing maintenance costs. We’re proud to have reached the ten-year mark, and we look forward to achieving even more in the next ten years.”

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