



PRESS RELEASE

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Ceremony marks opening of Robins software lab at site of iconic music label

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. – A Warner Robins Air Logistics Complex software laboratory built on historic musical ground is officially opened in downtown Macon.

Brig. Gen. John C. Kubinec, WR-ALC commander, joined by community partners cut the ribbon on the Blue Sky Lab, a contemporary software engineering facility, at The Lofts at Capricorn, 520 Martin Luther King Blvd.

The venture is a collaborative effort of WR-ALC and Mercer University, in conjunction with the Macon-Bibb County Industrial Authority, Macon-Bibb County consolidated government, the Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority and NewTown Macon.

The new software lab is located on the site of Capricorn Records, the birthplace and 1970s home for the music genre known as “southern rock.” The legendary Allman Brothers Band, members of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, recorded on the Capricorn label, as did popular artists such as the Marshall Tucker Band, Wet Willie, Elvin Bishop and more.

The Blue Sky Lab name came from a well-known Allman Brothers song. The title was deemed a good fit for the Robins’ operation as it suggests the vision of the “wild, blue yonder,” the territory ruled by the U.S. Air Force, and the long-time service slogan, “Aim High.”

The innovative software development facility brings 50 high-tech jobs into a vital field for the WR-ALC aircraft sustainment and logistics mission. The teams of 402nd Software Engineering Group personnel moving into the new facility will take on an initial workload of seven cloud-based software development projects.

The 7,000-square-foot space is fashioned as a modern, Silicon Valley-style software lab – a free environment for tech-savvy pros to innovate and create.

At an Oct. 14 ground-breaking ceremony for the lab, Kubinec said the crux of the software project is the teaming of the Robins’ software mission and Mercer’s engineering and computer science schools. The general spoke of the priceless merits of creating a modern-

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day laboratory for the complex's team of software engineers, the crew at the heart of the lab idea.

“We want to be here close to the students and Mercer,” Kubinec said. “We have a huge work force of Mercer grads. But I want it to be bigger and better. ... If we can be closer and more integrated with those students it's better for everybody.”

Kubinec listed three reasons why the software lab project at Capricorn was a good idea: sparking innovation and partnership; raising the level of awareness and excitement for the software group and for engineering and science students; and moving a vital Robins presence into the “ecosystem” of a vibrant downtown Macon.

The general called the lab project “a regional win for us.”

“We want to be a part of what's happening here in downtown Macon. We want to expose the work that we're doing for our Air Force to a larger audience, and we want to spark innovation and spark partnership,” Kubinec said.

According to the original project description from the complex, “WR-ALC aims to create a space for ingenuity by networking with community and educational leaders in Computer Science and Engineering. While continuously delivering war-winning software to our Airmen, this endeavor will allow for the furtherance of software agile development. Set in historic middle Georgia with ambitions to foster community involvement and grow revitalization efforts, WR-ALC will utilize the setting as a stage for recruitment of nationwide talents in the fields of extreme programming, lean production development, research and development.