

## VX Aerospace of Morganton Breaks “Speed” Record

*By Kimberly Conley*

VX Aerospace completed in 2 ½ months what generally takes up to 12 months; that is, achieving AS 9100 certification. VX Aerospace recently accepted a banner from the **North Carolina State University** Industrial Extension Service (IES) today, celebrating its AS 9100 certification.



“Less than three months from beginning to certificate in hand, is an all-time implementation speed record for IES,” said Barbara Williams, IES extension specialist responsible for assisting VX on this achievement.

VX Aerospace manufactures lightweight advanced composite parts for the defense aerospace industry and composite aircraft for the general aviation community. The lightweight composite parts replace fatigued or corroded metal

structures on military aircraft. VX Aerospace is also developing a revolutionary carbon fiber extendable-wing called HAWX (Hollow Area Wing Extendable), for the military’s Unmanned Air Vehicle (UAV) community. The HAWX enables a UAV to effectively conduct for both surveillance and attack missions in combat.

### **Gold Standard**

AS 9100 certification is the gold standard in the aviation industry and has been adopted worldwide as the quality management standard for aerospace manufacturing. It incorporates all the concepts of ISO 9001, while adding additional requirements relating to aerospace industry.

The certification scope comprises “Designing and Manufacturing Advanced Composite Structures and Assemblies for the Aerospace Industry.”

VX Aerospace is a tier 1 Department of Defense supplier of composite components. “We can’t even entertain a quote without this certification; it’s an absolute prerequisite for customers like Lockheed Martin and Boeing,” said Robert Skillen, chief engineer. He and Raymond Jones, chief executive officer, attended the U.S. Naval Academy together where they each earned a B.S. in aerospace engineering.

VX credits their success with help from Western Piedmont Community College, and the New and Expanding Industry Training Program (NEIT), who helped fund the AS 9100 training they received from the NC State IES.

VX understands the importance of community and investment. “We can take any person from this community, male or female, train them, and make them a valuable member of the VX team,” said Jones. VX intends to do just that.

With its growing base of defense aerospace work and innovations such as the HAWX wing, VX hopes to employ several hundred people in the Morganton-Lenoir area within five years.

The company is also the first tenant to sign on with the new industrial airpark at the Foothills Regional Airport in Morganton. Ground-breaking is scheduled by the end of this year. VX hopes to continue to grow and expand at the airpark and attract other aviation partners and suppliers as well. “We want to make Burke and Caldwell counties a hub of aviation activity, rivaling those in other areas of the country,” said Jones.

