

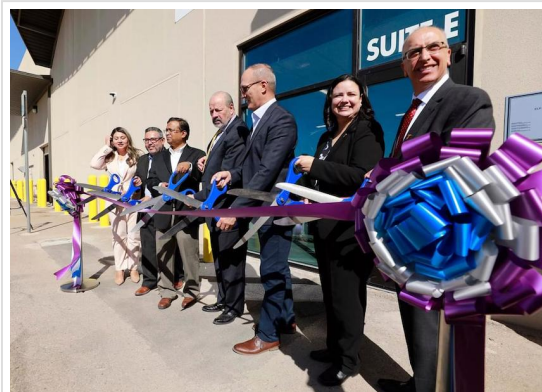


THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

UTEP, City of El Paso Coalition Inaugurate the ELP Innovation Factory

Innovative collaboration aims to bolster U.S. manufacturing

El Paso took a step toward becoming the country's hub for aerospace, defense, and advanced manufacturing on July 19, 2023, with the grand opening of the ELP Innovation Factory.



UTEP and City of El Paso representatives inaugurated the ELP Innovation Factory on July 19. From left to right: City Representative Cassandra Hernandez; Director of the El Paso International Airport Sam Rodriguez; Associate Vice President of the UTEP Aerospace Center Ahsan Choudhuri, Ph.D.; City of El Paso Mayor Oscar Leeser; Interim City Manager Colonel (Ret.) Cary Westin; UTEP Vice President and Chief of Staff Andrea Cortinas; and UTEP Vice President for Research Ahmad M. Itani, Ph.D.

"What we are witnessing today is the rebirth of manufacturing in the United States," said Ahsan Choudhuri, Ph.D., associate vice president of The University of Texas at El Paso Aerospace Center (<https://www.utep.edu/aerospace/>) and professor in the Department of Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering. "This will be the most advanced technology manufacturing community in the country, and that is a promise. El Paso will be a solution for America's manufacturing problem."

The 30,000-square-foot facility is the first phase of a coalition effort, led by UTEP and the City of El Paso, that was awarded \$40 million last year (<https://www.utep.edu/newsfeed/2022/el-paso-competes-with-over-500-cities-and-wins-40-million-grant-for-advanced-manufacturing-aerospace-and-defense-development.html>) to develop regional advanced manufacturing infrastructure to support the aerospace and defense industries. The award is funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration's \$1 Billion Build Back Better Regional Challenge.

The facility will be dedicated to growing innovative technology and provide small and medium early-stage manufacturers with the needed infrastructure and collaborative spaces to mature a product or an advanced manufacturing process.

In addition, the first tenants of the ELP Innovation Factory will receive their first three years of tenancy rent-free through a \$3 million American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant.

Manufacturers housed within the ELP Innovation Factory are selected based on their potential to have significant impact on expanded manufacturing capacity in El Paso and attract high-paying jobs. Once part of the ELP Innovation Factory, manufacturers receive technology innovation support and other services from UTEP's Aerospace Center and the W.M. Keck Center for 3D innovation (<https://www.utep.edu/keck/>).

After manufacturers have sufficiently advanced their product or manufacturing process, they will transition to an advanced manufacturing district that is currently being designed and will be located across the street from the factory.

UTEP Vice President for Research Ahmad Itani, Ph.D., said, "Supporting the region's business needs for an advanced manufacturing and aerospace industry is part of the University's strategic plan. I am confident this initiative will lead to a vibrant regional economy that grows and retains a highly skilled workforce for decades to come."

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