Boeing Moves Programs To Okla. For Lower Costs

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — The Boeing Co. announced Monday it will move two defense programs and an expected 550 engineering jobs from California to Oklahoma City in the next two years.

Boeing will move its C-130 Avionics Modernization program beginning in the first quarter of 2011. Its B-1 program is expected to move toward the end of 2012.

The programs now in Long Beach, Calif., are part of the Maintenance, Modifications & Upgrades division of the company's St. Louis-based Boeing Defense, Space & Security.

Boeing spokesman Forrest Gossett said the lower operating costs in Oklahoma were a factor in the company's decision.

"I know our leadership team took a look at the overall operating cost and made a determination," Gossett said.

Some California employees will be moved, while other positions will be filled locally, he said.

"Management is determining now which of those positions will be offered relocation to Oklahoma City," Gossett said. "We're literally just getting into that process."

The first employees to relocate will go to work at the Boeing building adjacent to Tinker Air Force Base, but the company likely will acquire additional space, he said.

Gov. Brad Henry and other state leaders praised Boeing for the move and cited the state's strong business climate and aviation history as a perfect fit for the expansion.

"We will benefit from the company's growth and exemplary corporate culture, and Boeing will prosper because of Oklahoma's proven track record of supporting and growing the aviation and aerospace industry," Henry said in a statement.

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