

## **Majority Of 6,000 Kan. Beechcraft Jobs Saved By Gov.**

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John Milburn, Associated Press Writer

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — An agreement has been reached that could keep "the vast majority" of the Hawker Beechcraft general aviation jobs in the Wichita, Gov. Mark Parkinson said late Tuesday.

Parkinson said he brokered a "long-term deal" with the company and the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers union. He declined to release details, but said the company accepted an incentive package that includes work force training money.

The aircraft manufacturing company, which was founded in Wichita in 1932 and employs about 6,000 people in the area, has been courted by Louisiana to relocate.

"The three parties here have reached an agreement that could, and I need to emphasize could, lead to saving of the vast majority of Hawker Beechcraft jobs in Wichita," Parkinson said after a two-hour meeting. "We don't have complete picture yet, but we're well on our way to a successful resolution to this challenge."

The deal is contingent on union members accepting the deal as part of a new work agreement, Parkinson said. Contract negotiations between the company and union were suspended Saturday, and the both sides agreed to meet with the governor in Topeka.

Hawker Beechcraft CEO Bill Boisture didn't respond to questions about whether a move to Louisiana was now off the table, but he said the company would be in better shape financially with the Kansas package. He thanked the governor "for working with us to develop a package that can potentially provide stability and sustainment to Hawker Beechcraft and our presence in Wichita."

Parkinson said the agreement ends uncertainty that began earlier in the day with rumors and reports about a possible deal with Louisiana that would have sent half or more of the 6,000 high-wage, high-skilled jobs out of Kansas. The governor declined to say how many of the company's jobs would remain under the deal reached Tuesday.

"We made an offer to Hawker and it's accepted it. The only contingency now is successful negotiations between the union and the company," said Parkinson, a Democrat who leaves office in January.

Stephen Moret, the economic development secretary in Louisiana, declined to comment Tuesday about efforts to lure Hawker Beechcraft, citing competitive and confidential reasons.

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Boisture said his company had the support of the union to break of contract talks to pursue the agreement. The talks began in this summer but were suspended at Parkinson's request to seek an agreement to save Kansas jobs.

"We are hopeful about reinitiating negotiations," Boisture said.

Rich Michalski, general vice president for the union, said getting the agreement with Parkinson and the state allowed both sides to resume negotiations.

"He's acted, we have an agreement and we will move on from here," Michalski said. "These are very sensitive times. People's futures are on the line and we are going to work hard to secure those futures."

Parkinson declined to provide details of the incentive package or employment levels, saying he didn't want to jeopardize the contract negotiations. He said the agreement had guarantees for the state similar to one reached this summer with Bombardier Aerospace to continue its operations, also in Wichita.

"My belief is that to reveal the specifics would jeopardize the possibility of Hawker staying here, and I know that none of us want to do that," Parkinson said. "I would not reach an agreement on behalf of the state of Kansas that I didn't believe was in the best interest of the entire state. I wouldn't reach an agreement if we didn't protect every job in Kansas that we could."

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