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WICHITA, Kan. (AP) — Bombardier Aerospace unveiled plans Tuesday to expand its Learjet site in Wichita, creating 450 new jobs and providing a much-needed boost to a city still stinging from Boeing's announcement that it plans to close its defense plant here.

The mood was upbeat this week at Bombardier's plant as Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback and Steve Ridolfi, president of Bombardier Business Air, announced what will be the second expansion of the Learjet plant in two years.

The company first announced in July 2010 that it planned to build its Learjet 85 at the Kansas plant in a move that would support 600 new and existing jobs. Bombardier, which employs 2,800 in Wichita, has already created 500 of those jobs promised in 2010 and needs to fill 150 more jobs to meet its earlier commitment to the state.

Tuesday's news — backed by state incentives tied to the job numbers — means Bombardier will create an additional 450 jobs in the next seven to 10 years.

"There are eight cities in the world that can really build an airplane — and this is one of the big ones," Ridolfi said.

Wichita, which calls itself the "air capital of the world," is home to major manufacturing plants for Cessna Aircraft, Bombardier Aerospace, Hawker Beechcraft, The Boeing Co. and Spirit AeroSystems, as well as more than a hundred smaller aircraft parts suppliers.

Last week Boeing announced it was closing its Wichita defense site — which employs 2,160 workers — by the end of 2013.

Ridolfi told reporters that the Montreal-based Bombardier Aerospace knows it needs skilled workers to fill those jobs.

"Quite frankly, the Boeing decision didn't give us pause. It was a surprise to us," Ridolfi said. "For us, it is kind of advantageous."

Bombardier plans an expansion of the company's Flight Test Center, new facilities for paint and production, and a new delivery center. The company will also establish a Bombardier Center of Excellence of Engineering and Information Technology.

"This is key and important to us," Brownback said. "Wichita is the best place in the world to build airplanes. That remains the case. We have the infrastructure here, we have the suppliers here, we have an excellent trained competent dedicated workforce. We have the research that is here. These are all the components to

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make this a fabulous aviation cluster."

The state is providing \$16 million in financial support to go along with \$600 million the company is spending to develop the Learjet 85 midsize jet and expand Learjet's Wichita facility. The city and Sedgwick County have already pledged \$1 million each in incentives for the project. The government incentives are tied to the job creation numbers.

Ridolfi said despite its own \$600 million investment, the government financial incentives were very important to Bombardier "as a show of partnership."

Brownback said the Bombardier expansion shows the city is a good place to build aircraft, despite the pending Boeing closure.

"I lament the Boeing defense's decision. ... but you are seeing the third largest aircraft manufacturer in the world, Bombardier Learjet, invest heavily in Wichita," Brownback said.

The governor said what he liked about this Learjet 85 expansion is that it starts to get the city into the mid-size, commuter jet commercial market. The city's manufacturers have been building the smaller business jets.

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