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Aurora's Additive Manufacturing Wing Showcased in NAMII Announcement

Manassas, VA August 17, 2012 – Aurora Flight Sciences' 3D wing, designed by Aurora and built with additive manufacturing technology developed by Stratasys Inc., was showcased at yesterday's announcement of the new National Additive Manufacturing Innovation Institute (NAMII) by senior officials of the Obama administration.

The announcement of the new manufacturing technology center was made by Frank Kendall, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology along with Rebecca Blank, Acting Secretary of Commerce and Gene Sperling, Director of the National Economic Council and Assistant to the President for Economic Policy, on August 16 in Youngstown, Ohio. The event was also attended by United States Senator Sherrod Brown and United States Congressman Tim Ryan of Ohio.



In forefront from left, Gene Sperling (Director of the National Economic Council and Assistant to the President); Frank Kendall (Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics); Brett Lambert (Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Manufacturing and Industrial Base Policy); Rebecca Blank (Acting Secretary of Commerce); and Ralph Resnick (President and Executive Director of NCDMM) hold Aurora's 3D wing developed with Stratasys additive manufacturing technology at the NAMII announcement. Photo credit: Bruce W. Palmer.

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Aurora Flight Sciences and Stratasys fabricated and flew a 62-inch wingspan aircraft with a wing composed entirely of additive manufactured components. The wing was designed by Aurora and manufactured by Stratasys utilizing their Fused Deposition Modeling (FDM[®]) 3D printers.

The Stratasys FDM printer fabricated Aurora’s wing using a 3D design model, by depositing layers of high-performance thermoplastic material. This manufacturing approach reduces some of the design constraints engineers face when using traditional fabrication techniques. FDM offers unparalleled capabilities for rapid prototyping of small aerospace structures.

The design of the wing’s structure was optimized to reduce weight while maintaining strength. “The success of this wing has shown that 3D printing can be used to rapidly fabricate the structure of a small airplane,” said Dan Campbell, Structures Research Engineer at Aurora. “If a wing replacement is necessary, we simply click print and within a couple days we have a new wing ready to fly.”

Aurora and Stratasys will continue to work together to develop additive manufacturing for aerospace applications. “In the aerospace industry, additive manufacturing has the benefits of reducing material usage, doing away with tooling, reducing part count, and simplifying assembly,” said Bill Macy, Application Development Lead at Stratasys. “These benefits allow the manufacture of a low quantity of products at lower cost, in less time, with competitive performance.”

About Aurora Flight Sciences

Aurora Flight Sciences designs and builds aerospace vehicles for commercial and military applications. Aurora is headquartered in Manassas, VA and operates production facilities in Bridgeport, WV and Columbus, MS as well as a Research and Development Center in Cambridge, MA. To learn more about Aurora please visit our website at www.aurora.aero.

About Stratasys Inc.

Stratasys Inc. is a maker of additive manufacturing machines for prototyping and producing plastic parts. The company markets under the brands uPrint, Dimension 3D Printers, and Fortus Production 3D Printers. The company also operates RedEye On Demand, a digital-manufacturing service for prototypes and production parts. Stratasys products are used in the aerospace, defense, automotive, medical, business and industrial equipment, education, architecture, and consumer product industries. To learn more about Stratasys please visit their website at www.stratasys.com.

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