



AUBURN

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

In a region that is economically stressed, being a contender in the international aerospace arena might be considered a pipe dream to some, but to Helispec Inc. of Brantley, Ala., it is a reality. With assistance from the Auburn Technical Assistance Center (ATAC), the Alabama Technology Network Center at Auburn University, Helispec has attained AS 9100-2000 registration and is now qualified to compete for and attain a variety of industrial and governmental aerospace business contracts.

Being a small business, this is a major accomplishment for the company. Helispec Vice President Mark Topping says it is unusual to locate an aircraft repair facility in a rural center such as Brantley, Ala. in Crenshaw County, but he adds that the company chose the location for a number of reasons. "One of the most important reasons we selected this area is because we thought we could help the region economically," Topping said.

## ATAC helps Brantley, Ala. firm attain aviation quality status

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Founded in 2004 by Sandra Smith, Gregg Holt and Mark Topping, the small helicopter repair and overhaul plant specializes in repairing crash damage and overhauling a variety of helicopters, from Russian MI-8 through to the Boeing CH-47 Chinook for the military, civil agencies and private customers.



*Helispec Inc. of Brantley, Ala. recently attained quality management status that enables the small helicopter repair facility to compete in the international aerospace business arena. Shown, left to right, at Helispec's recent ceremony celebrating the accomplishment are Brantley Police Chief Titus Averett, Crenshaw County Industrial Development Board Member Wayne Blackmon, Auburn Technical Assistance Center Quality Specialist Chuck McPherson, Brantley Mayor Bernie Sullivan, Helispec Vice President Mark Topping, Helispec CEO Sandra Smith, Auburn Technical Assistance Center Director Henry Burdg. Auburn Technical Assistance Center assisted Helispec in developing its quality management system and attaining AS 9100-2000 registration.*

"We really got our start doing paint work," said Helispec Chief Executive Officer Sandra Smith. "We now do a variety of repairs."

Helispec first began its relationship with ATAC in 2005 when ATAC Quality Specialist Chuck McPherson helped the firm attain its FAA Repair Station license.

"Once we attained FAA Repair Station licensing, we moved on to establishing a quality management system that would enable AS 9100-2000 registration," McPherson said.

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**-- Mark Topping, Vice President**



*ATAC Quality Specialist Chuck McPherson facilitated Helispec's quality certification.*

Helispec averages repair and paint work on some six to eight aircraft monthly and company officials say business is growing.

“Business has started to increase,” Topping said.

Topping adds that the firm anticipates increasing its employee base by approximately 30 by the end of the year.

AS 9100 is the quality measurement standard for the aerospace industry. Criteria are based on the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standards; however, the International Aerospace Standard (AS 9100) includes some 80 certification measures over and above the ISO certification process for other types of manufacturing.

“Now that we have attained AS 9100-2000 registration, we plan to continue our relationship with ATAC to assist us in achieving AS 9110 certification for aircraft maintenance organizations,” Smith said.



*Helispec Vice President Mark Topping and ATAC Quality Specialist Chuck McPherson stand in the hatch of a helicopter being refurbished in the company's hanger.*

### **Results**

Helispec averages repair and paint work on some six to eight aircraft monthly and company officials say business is growing. “Business has started to increase,” Topping said. He adds that the firm anticipates increasing its employee base to approximately 30 by the end of the year.

### **Testimonial**

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*Auburn Technical Assistance Center was established in 1976 and is an affiliate of the Alabama Technology Network and an Economic Development Administration University Center. As an Outreach arm of the Auburn University College of Business, ATAC provides business and technical assistance, customized training, and consultation in implementing value-added strategies to manufacturers and other businesses, not-for-profit organizations and government agencies in Alabama and the Southeast. SOAR is an ATAC publication. Direct inquiries and questions to Mitch Emmons, Sr. Outreach Assoc., 334.844.3881, emmonmb@auburn.edu.*

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