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Tunica Air's FAA certification paves way for growth of aircraft maintenance business

Memphis Business Journal - by [Trey Heath](#) Staff writer

Thanks to a swift certification process by the **Federal Aviation Administration, Tunica Air Group** LLC is poised to explode with growth in its aircraft maintenance business.

Even though TAG mechanics have been operating under their individual licenses, the entire company is now an official repair station in accordance with FAA rules.

Richard Carbuccia, director of quality assurance for TAG, says the designation has been one of the major goals of the company, which was formed in 2006 by a group of six FedEx Corp. mechanics.

"When we first started this business sitting at a table with a piece of paper, we set a list of goals," he says. "This certification was one of our biggest goals. It is the key to the rest of the industry, and there is no telling where we will be able to be from this point on."

The certification will allow TAG to pursue new business and to more than double the size of its employee base and its facility space over the next five years, Carbuccia says.

To get ready for that type of growth, TAG is expanding its 22,000-square-foot facility at **Tunica Airport** by 4,500 square feet with an addition to the company's shop area.

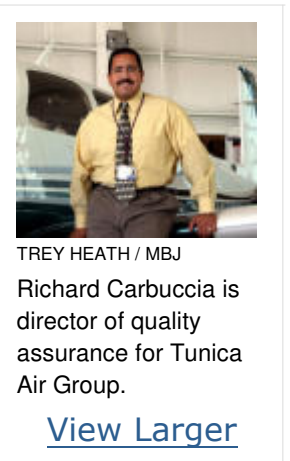
The expansion is only the first phase of the company's master plan that Carbuccia says could have a major economic impact on the Tunica area.

The FAA certification has allowed TAG to pursue several large maintenance contracts. To prepare for the future business, TAG is planning to build a new 90,000-square-foot maintenance facility within the next few years.

"We are working on two big contracts that could bring a lot of economic impact to this area," Carbuccia says. "Tunica is a very untouched area. The growth potential here is very good, and we are proud to be here."

The new facility will produce about 120 new jobs for the first year alone. TAG currently has 18 employees at its facility.

"That will be our next goal is to build a maintenance-specific hanger," Carbuccia says. "We will be able to house heavy jet aircraft from wing tip to wing tip. We are still trying to figure out the specifics, but



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Richard Carbuccia is director of quality assurance for Tunica Air Group.

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it is a very feasible goal for us. We've done the numbers on it and we know what it is going to take."

But those plans would not be possible without first receiving FAA certification, a process that usually takes years and several attempts to complete.

TAG officials compare the certification to passing the bar exam, but Carbuccia was able to finish the process in six weeks after about 200 man-hours of work. The main task of the certification includes writing and submitting manuals to the FAA about all the company's procedures.

"They tell the FAA how we are going to do business along with how we are going to do everything on a day-to-day basis," Carbuccia says. "Everything from how to receive a part to how we store it and organize it."

Because of technical issues involved in writing the manuals, the work is generally contracted to an experienced technical writer. TAG at first employed an outside contractor to complete the manuals, but the contractor fell off a ladder at home and broke his back, leaving the task to Carbuccia.

"He had just gotten started, and I think he just had Tunica Air Group written on the top of the page," Carbuccia says.

Although it is common for the FAA to reject the first attempt at certification, TAG was able to earn it on its first pass, allowing the company to pursue insurance, government and major airline work.

"When a company sees that our company has been certified, they know the company has been through a rigorous audit and the company is doing things the way they are supposed to be done," Carbuccia says. "That opens up a lot of business opportunities for us."

And as TAG continues to grow, Tunica Airport will continue to reap the benefits of having the company based at its facility, says Cliff Nash, Tunica Airport executive director.

"As we develop the airport, we feel (TAG) is an integral part of the airport," he says. "It's a tremendous opportunity for the airport having them here, and it is a tremendous catalyst for the continuing development of the airport."

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