



COLORADO REAL ESTATE JOURNAL

THE COMMUNICATION CHANNEL OF THE COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE COMMUNITY

AUGUST 21-SEPTEMBER 3, 2024

Aerospace

Exploring the 30% surge in classified infrastructure

Aurora, renowned for hosting Buckley Space Force Base, one of the six national Space Force bases, is witnessing an almost 30% increase in classified infrastructure. This growth is primarily driven by the escalating needs for sensitive compartmented information facilities among aerospace and defense sectors. The demand for these secure environments, where sensitive information can be discussed and stored safely, is soaring as Aurora cements itself as a pivotal hub in national defense and aerospace innovation.

■ **The catalysts of growth.** The recent spike in SCIF space demand in Aurora can be attributed to several factors. First, the presence of Buckley Space Force Base provides a foundational security and defense infrastructure that acts as a magnet for aerospace companies and defense contractors. These entities require proximity to critical military installations to facilitate easy access to both facilities and information, thus driving the construction of additional SCIFs.

Secondly, the Colorado Space Business Roundtable and Aurora Economic Development Council have been pivotal in fostering relationships and collaboration between aero-



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space leaders, government officials and defense contractors. This synergy is crucial in maintaining a steady flow of ideas and innovations, ensuring that Aurora remains at the forefront of aerospace developments.

■ **Enhanced government and industry collaboration.** A significant highlight in Aurora's aerospace ascension is the collaborative efforts between various sectors. A recent Aerospace Exchange hosted by Fitzmartin Consulting in partnership with the Colorado Space Business Roundtable at Regis Jesuit High School is a prime example. It brought together influential figures from the U.S. Space Command, the Colorado Air National Guard and industry giants like Lockheed Martin and Sierra Nevada Corp. This gathering was not just a meeting of minds but a strategic alignment of industry and government to discuss and expand SCIF capabilities critical for national security and commercial space

ventures.

In the realm of aerospace and defense, the bureaucratic process for introducing innovative technologies can often be lengthy, hindered by the extensive security and compliance checks required by the government. Companies like Westway, Koelbel and Nooks, however, have found a strategic way to circumvent these delays by partnering with accredited sponsors who can facilitate faster access to secure facilities. This approach significantly shortens the real estate cycle, allowing these companies to establish SCIF spaces much more rapidly than traditional methods. By leveraging the sponsorship of accredited facilities, not only do these companies streamline the approval process, but they also minimize the associated costs. This efficiency is crucial in a fast-paced industry where the timely deployment of technology can provide a competitive edge and meet urgent national security needs more effectively.

■ **Infrastructure and economic development.** The panel discussion featured experts from Aurora EDC, Maxson Engineering, Nooks, Koelbel and Westway Services Group, who explored how Aurora's unique ecosystem

supports the burgeoning needs of the aerospace and defense industries. Moderated by Air Force veteran Trevor Nolan, a graduate of the Colorado Governors Fellow program and a doctoral student at the University of Denver, they discussed the challenges and strategies in developing the necessary infrastructure to support the growth of classified projects. For instance, Westway has recently expanded its facilities by almost 90,000 square feet to accommodate a backlog of 78 tenants requiring secure spaces.

Moreover, new projects like the one initiated by Innovus, which includes a 200,000-sf development, underline the ongoing efforts to meet the high demand for SCIF space. These infrastructural expansions not only cater to immediate needs but also foster long-term economic growth by attracting more businesses to the area and creating high-value jobs.

■ **Talent acquisition and community engagement.** The Colorado Space Business Roundtable's focus on talent acquisition and community support is crucial in sustaining the growth of Aurora's aerospace sector. By engaging local educational institutions like Regis Jesuit High School, the community is preparing the next generation of

engineers, scientists, and leaders in aerospace and defense. The new Science & Innovation Center at Regis Jesuit is a testament to this commitment, designed to inspire students and facilitate deeper partnerships with leading aerospace firms.

■ **Gratitude and future outlook.** As Aurora continues to thrive as a key player in the aerospace and defense industries, the collaboration between congressional staff, county commissioners, the mayor's office and military veterans remains integral. Their collective efforts are setting the stage for continued innovation and security, ensuring that Aurora not only meets the current demands for SCIF space but is also well prepared for future challenges and opportunities in aerospace and defense.

In conclusion, the 30% spike in classified infrastructure in Aurora is a multifaceted phenomenon driven by strategic collaborations, infrastructural developments and community engagement. As these efforts converge, Aurora is set to remain a vital node in America's aerospace and defense network, poised for future growth and innovation. ▲

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