

Economic Profile

Orbital ATK

Elkton, Maryland

CONTINUED USE



Rocket Design and
Manufacturing

CLEANUP OVERSEEN BY

EPA with assistance from Maryland Department
of Environmental Protection

This 550-acre facility in Elkton, Maryland, has been in operation since the 1930s. Two companies used the facility for pesticide formulation (mainly DDT) beginning in the 1940s, before it became the site of rocket propulsion system design and manufacturing. Historical waste disposal and other facility operations led to contamination in the soil, surface water and groundwater. EPA is overseeing cleanup of the facility under the RCRA Hazardous Waste Cleanup Program (formerly the RCRA Corrective Action Program).

The facility's legacy of rocket motor production continues today. The multinational aerospace and defense company Northrop Grumman employs 400 people at the facility. In addition, a local credit union is also located at the facility. Together, these two businesses generate \$148 million in sales revenue per year. A new hypersonics center under construction at the facility is expected to bring additional jobs to the area.



ANNUAL SALES

\$148 million



EMPLOYEES

406



ANNUAL WAGES

\$54 million

For more information about RCRA and the economic benefits of site reuse, visit www.epa.gov/hw/learn-about-hazardous-waste-cleanups





NORTHROP GRUMMAN'S ELKTON CAMPUS HAS BEEN DESIGNING AND MANUFACTURING SYSTEMS AND CONTROLS FOR SOME OF THE NATION'S MOST COMPLEX DEFENSE AND SPACE SYSTEMS FOR 75 YEARS. AS ONE OF THE COUNTY'S MAJOR EMPLOYERS, NORTHROP GRUMMAN'S ABILITY TO USE THE PROPERTY DURING THE CLEANUP HAS BEEN INCREDIBLY IMPORTANT TO BOTH THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND THE SUPPORT OF OUR WARFIGHTERS.

Danielle Hornberger, Cecil County Executive

In 1984, groundwater contamination was discovered in two wells at the facility. The facility operator investigated and found several areas contaminated from the burning of rocket fuel, waste disposal and pesticide use related to facility operations. Corrective action to address environmental conditions in these areas began in 1989. In 2017, EPA selected a final cleanup plan. Cleanup consists of monitoring the natural reduction of toxic chemicals in the groundwater and the consolidation and covering of contaminated soil. Capping of contaminated soils was completed in 2019 including a low permeability clay liner and 18-inches of topsoil. The cap covers approximately two acres and is inspected annually. Twenty-one groundwater monitoring wells are sampled on an annual basis. Land use and groundwater use are restricted to prevent human exposure to contamination.

Throughout the environmental investigation and cleanup process, the facility has continued to produce rocket motors for aerospace and defense applications. In 2018, Northrop Grumman acquired the facility. NASA is one of the facility's main customers. The STAR 48BV motor made in Elkton helped propel the Parker Solar Probe in 2018. The facility also produced a rocket motor for the Space Launch System, a vehicle that will carry a crew to the surface of the moon. In 2021, NASA awarded the facility a contract to work on a propulsion system for the Mars Ascent Vehicle.

In 2021, Northrop Grumman broke ground at the facility for their Hypersonics Center of Excellence. The 60,000-square-foot center will use state-of-the-art technology to produce hypersonic weapons. A solar field will power the facility. The center is expected to bring additional technically-skilled, high-wage jobs to the area.

The businesses at the facility generate \$148 million in annual sales and provide over 400 jobs. As the facility's cleanup proceeds under the RCRA Hazardous Waste Cleanup Program, the Elkton plant will continue to serve as an economic driver for the community while providing valuable technology to NASA and the Department of Defense.



One of the Launch System Abort motors for NASA's Orion spacecraft was built and tested at the Elkton plant.



The rocket propulsion facility in Elkton provides 400 jobs and an estimated \$53 million in employee income per year.