



## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **For Immediate Release:**

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### **World's Leading Aviation and Marine Technology Company Begins Hiring in Lafayette, LA**

With the opening of a \$120 million, 70,000 square foot facility located in LEDA's Northpark Technology Center, FlightSafety International will augment Lafayette's growing reputation as a hub for digital media and technology. FlightSafety International provides interactive simulator training for helicopter pilots and aviation professionals.

"This is an exciting win for Lafayette and for the entire State of Louisiana," said Louisiana Economic Development Secretary Stephen Moret. "In a lot of ways, this project represents the culmination of years of focused effort by LEDA and others to cultivate a vibrant technology sector in Lafayette, and it is a strong indication of Acadiana's positive momentum in attracting new, high-paying jobs. Moreover, FlightSafety's presence in Louisiana will help strengthen regional and state efforts to cultivate two growing industry sectors – aviation and digital media."

FlightSafety International will host its inaugural job fair at the Hilton Lafayette and Towers from 9am to 4pm on September 26 and 27. As the company prepares to open its Lafayette, Louisiana facility, company officials seek to hire simulator technicians, instructors, and customer support teammates. Within the next few years, the center plans to employ over 100 individuals, ranging from technicians and instructors to administration and marketers specializing in avionics.

FlightSafety International has 43 learning centers stationed at major aviation hubs around the globe, placing Lafayette among cities such as London, Paris, and New York. The company has built the world's largest fleet of full-flight simulators including its newest edition in LEDA's Northpark Technology Center. The new Lafayette location will cater to the large and growing offshore helicopter industry, led in part by PHI, Inc. (PHI), who played an integral role in leading FlightSafety International to the Lafayette region.

"We are pleased with the access to FlightSafety's new facility in the Lafayette area to serve our complex training needs, covering our current and future requirements. FlightSafety is a world class partner that is known for its professional approach to helicopter training procedures," said Al A. Gonsoulin, PHI Chairman & CEO.

Featuring eight technologically advanced flight simulators, the FlightSafety center will offer interactive and immersive, first-class training, which is complementary to other high-tech, digitally advanced training programs that are currently being used in Acadiana, such as the Commercial Vehicle Operations Simulator and the Virtual Welding Program offered by the Louisiana Technical College System.

“Our economy has experienced local and regional gaps in the availability of a qualified workforce,” says Gregg Gothreaux, President & CEO of LEDA. “We acknowledge that employee training is now a vital industry and because of our incredible advancements in technology, Lafayette has the opportunity to participate as a leader and pioneer new methods in solving workforce issues.”

FlightSafety’s use of virtual flight simulators strengthens Lafayette’s reputation as a major player in the field of digital media and immersive technologies. In recent years, a number of technological developments have emerged in Lafayette, including Fiber-to-the-Premise initiative and the often-celebrated Louisiana Immersive Technologies Enterprise (LITE), one of the largest and most advanced 3D immersive visualization and supercomputing facilities in the world. The University of Louisiana at Lafayette is also home to unparalleled virtual reality and digital media labs via the Center for Advanced Computer Studies. These technological advancements will allow Lafayette-based businesses and organizations to find a niche in the creation of interactive media and serious gaming applications by providing a qualified, local workforce.

“The investment of FlightSafety International creates a huge impact on our community today but their presence exemplifies and secures Lafayette’s position in digital media and technology driven industries in the future. As noted by the 2008 Milken Institute Ranking, Lafayette is the 14<sup>th</sup> Best Performing Small Sized City in the Nation. The opening of FlightSafety is a testament to the success we can achieve through a cohesive approach of utilizing our local technology infrastructure to create and sustain jobs,” says Gregg Gothreaux, President & CEO of LEDA.

For additional details regarding FlightSafety International or the upcoming job fair, please contact the LEDA Resource Center by calling (337) 593-1400.