



**For Immediate Release**  
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Panama City, Florida – (May 9, 2018) – The Bay Economic Development Alliance (BayEDA) announced today that one of the world’s leading automotive suppliers will be establishing its United States headquarters and first U.S. manufacturing operation in Bay County, Florida. Air Temp of America, Inc. (Air Temp), a subsidiary of Air Temp de México, S.A. de C.V will locate in the City of Panama City, Florida. Founded and headquartered in Mérida, Yucatán, Mexico, Air Temp is a leading supplier to automobile manufacturers worldwide. The company produces automotive parts that include condensers, radiators, heat exchangers, evaporators and other components. Air Temp is a leading Tier 1 supplier to Volkswagen, Nissan, Ford, Peugeot, and other OEMs. Air Temp has been named as the Volkswagen supplier of the year five times.

For their U.S. operation, Air Temp has purchased an existing facility in Panama City, Florida. The company is beginning the process of modernizing the property for their manufacturing operation. The company will make a capital investment of approximately \$6 million and create 50 new jobs for skilled employees in Bay County.

According to Jorge Habib Sr., President and CEO of Air Temp of Mexico, Inc., “We are excited about opening our new operation in Bay County, Florida and investing in manufacturing in the United States.” Jorge Habib, a dual citizen of the United States and Mexico, sees this investment as a model for growing the economy in the U.S. “To create a sustainable future for America we must invest in creating high skilled manufacturing jobs and growing our skilled workforce for the future. We have found Bay County, Florida to be the ideal location to expand our company and establish our U.S. operations. By working closely with BayEDA, Port Panama City, CareerSource Gulf Coast, the local governments, and many other entities we are confident that Bay County is the best location for our new manufacturing operation” stated Jorge Habib.

This project was made possible through the combined efforts of BayEDA, Port Panama City, Enterprise Florida, CareerSource Gulf Coast, Bay County Board of County Commissioners, and the City of Panama City. “Having worked with Port Panama City for nearly a decade, we knew Bay County would be the perfect place to build our U.S. operation. This investment into Bay County emphasizes our commitment to growing advanced manufacturing in the United States,” stated Jorge Habib Sr.

Coined Project Gorrie, this project has been a work in progress for Bay County for more than a year. Air Temp of Mexico, Inc.'s worldwide headquarters is located in Panama City's sister city, Mérida, Yucatán, Mexico. Local delegations from both areas have visited and formalized agreements between the cities. This partnership between the two cities dates back to 2003.

Jorge Gonzalez, Chairman of the Bay Economic Development Alliance and President and Chief Executive Officer of The St. Joe Company stated, "We are pleased to welcome Air Temp into Bay County and we look forward to Air Temp's example of success for other companies looking to invest and create quality jobs in our community. Our community should be proud of the team that partnered with Air Temp to bring advanced manufacturing to Panama City. It is good to have a new corporate partner as we continue to experience positive economic momentum."

"We are excited to welcome Air Temp to Bay County," said U.S. Congressman Neal Dunn. "This investment into high tech manufacturing is right in line with our current administration's goals for growing the economy. Air Temp is a world leader in automotive supplies. This new venture will bring 50 jobs to Bay County and is a \$6 million-dollar manufacturing investment to the region. Thank you to the Bay Economic Development Alliance for making this project a reality in Northwest Florida."

The City of Panama City has been intimately involved with the progression of this project. City of Panama City Mayor Greg Brudnicki stated, "Air Temp will be an excellent company in Panama City. This project will be very impactful for our community by bringing high tech manufacturing jobs to one of our areas of focused growth within the City. The project will also bring back to life an existing facility in Panama City and employ 50 people right in the heart of Panama City."

"We are elated to welcome Air Temp to Bay County. Community partners came together to offer competitive solutions to win this project in Panama City," Bay County Commission Chairman Bill Dozier said. "Air Temp will be a great addition to our community, and we are excited that this investment from Mexico is occurring right here in Bay County, Florida. Air Temp is committed to growing the manufacturing base in America, and we will help them in that effort."

Wayne Stubbs, Executive Director, Port Panama City, has worked closely with Air Temp for several years due to their usage of the Port. According to Wayne Stubbs, "Air Temp is the first auto parts manufacturing company to locate in Bay County based on the shipping connection between the Port of Panama City and the Port of Progreso in Mexico. We commend them for making this very strategic and timely move and expect others will follow their example."

"The State of Florida has a pro-business, low tax environment," stated state Rep. Jay Trumbull. "This helps support businesses that locate in our state. Air Temp is an excellent example of how our 'pro-business' policies are creating a positive impact on local economies."

Florida State Senator, George Gainer stated, “We are proud that Air Temp will be calling Panama City their U.S. home. This project proves that our strategy to diversify our economy is working. Bay County, Florida is winning at the recruitment of high tech manufacturing companies located throughout the world.”

#### **About Air Temp de México, S.A. de C.V**

Founded in 1982, Air Temp of Mexico, Inc designs and manufacturers air conditioning equipment, heat exchangers, radiators, and other components for the automotive industry. In 1987 Air Temp become a national supplier for the Volkswagen Sedan. The company’s business has grown to include automotive OEM’s such as Nissan, GM, DINA, Ford, PSA Group, and others. The company was founded by Jorge Habib, Sr. who operates as the company’s CEO and President. The companies first manufacturing operation was in Merida, Yucatan, Mexico and has grown to include an operation in Puebla, Mexico and Mexico City, Mexico. Currently the company employs over 1,000 employees within these locations.

#### **About Bay Economic Development Alliance**

The Bay County Economic Development Alliance (BayEDA) is Bay County’s economic development entity. Publicly and privately funded, BayEDA serves Bay County in the mission of supporting the existing businesses in Bay County and in the recruitment of new businesses to Bay County. BayEDA supports the existing pillars of the economy and is dedicated to growing and diversifying the Bay County economy.