

State firms supplied parts of Airbus A380

A good portion of the European A380 was made in America -- with Minnesota getting a share.

By [Dee DePass](#), Star Tribune

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Representatives from airplane parts makers Goodrich Sensors and Integrated Systems in Burnsville and PaR Systems in Shoreview looped above the Upper Midwest on Tuesday morning inside their latest project, the new Airbus A380.

The massive aircraft could spell more opportunity for Minnesotans if Airbus lands more orders for it.

Among the Minnesota firms -- or Minnesota divisions of larger companies -- that worked on the plane are Goodrich; milling machiner PaR; Abelconn in New Hope; two Minneapolis-area Honeywell contractors; Lake Engineering in Long Lake; Nelson Numeric in Bloomington and Remmele Engineering in St. Paul.

Goodrich and PaR invested years of research and millions in development to make their multimillion-dollar products.

"It's an exciting program," Goodrich SIS President Brian Gora said.

Goodrich SIS, with 1,400 workers in Burnsville and Eagan, outfitted the Airbus with a host of systems, including ice detection, primary flight control motor drive electronics, temperature and pressure sensors and air data systems. SIS, a division of the Goodrich Corp., spent the last seven years building some of the "non-glamorous" high-tech guts of the plane, Gora said.

Outside Minnesota, Goodrich also made the landing gear, evacuation slides and wing and rudder actuators.

PaR, with 250 employees including 110 in Shoreview, made two massive 160-foot-long milling and drilling machines that were used to build the A380's wing support beams. The Shoreview engineers began work on the machine more than five years ago.

"We participate in a lot of aircraft programs and we feel some ownership in every one," said PaR Robotics president Brian Behm. "I saw [the A380] come in and land over [Interstate] 494 as I was driving. ... It stands out in the sky. It's impressive."

PaR makes aviation robotics and machines for Boeing, fighter jets, aircraft carriers and destroyers, but its beginnings were in cereal.

"We were originally a part of General Mills," Behm said. "Our company was started by the Manhattan Project to make the first atomic bomb. The Army came to General Mills and asked [its] equipment division to make a manipulator arm to handle radioactive material. And they did it, and one thing led to another."

General Mills spun off the division in 1961.

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