



QUARTERLY FLAGSHIP · MARKET INTELLIGENCE

Space Coast Aerospace & Defense Hiring Report

Brevard County, Florida • September 2026 Edition • Quarterly Flagship

Tracking who is hiring, what they pay, the contracts shaping demand, and where the Space Coast aerospace and defense workforce is headed.
Compiled monthly for employers, job seekers, and the regional community.

Prepared by Intrepidus Talent Solutions, specialist aerospace and defense staffing for Florida's Space Coast.

In this issue

1. Why this report
2. The Monthly Pulse
3. Space Coast Openings Index
4. Contracts & the Demand Signal
5. What the Market Pays
6. This Month on the Space Coast
7. Monthly Spotlight
8. National Context: U.S. vs. the Space Coast
9. Get the Report Every Month
10. Appendix & Methodology

Why this report

If you hire, recruit, or work in aerospace and defense on the Space Coast, this report is built for you.

Each month it answers the questions that matter most in this market, using public, verifiable data: Who is hiring right now, and for what roles? What does the market actually pay here? Which federal contracts will create the next wave of jobs? Is the local market expanding or contracting?

Hiring managers and HR teams use it to benchmark pay and see who they are competing with for talent. Recruiters use it to spot where demand is moving. Job seekers, including transitioning military, use it to find who is hiring and what it takes to qualify.

This is Issue No. 4 and the first quarterly flagship. Alongside the monthly fresh layer, this issue carries the four quarterly refreshes we promised: the **county wage data** (BLS QCEW, first quarter of 2026, released August 28), the **federal contract census** for Brevard County with record-level award IDs, the **KSC ground-systems (COMET) contract outcome**, and the **quarterly review of the tracked company list**, with three names removed and one added. It also closes the loop on last month's biggest open question. Lockheed Martin's careers-site migration is complete, and we re-baseline its series inside.

Get every issue free. [Subscribe at intrepidus-ts.com](https://intrepidus-ts.com).

The Monthly Pulse

The Space Coast aerospace and defense market kept expanding through the late summer. Our Openings Index, a same-date count across a **fixed 21-company watch list in which every company has active Brevard operations after this quarter's list review**, recorded **1,844 open roles** on September 22. On the comparable basis (excluding Lockheed Martin's re-baselined series and the newly added Extant Aerospace from both months), tracked openings rose **about 149 roles, or 9.2%, from August**. If every point of this month's counting improvements at Collins Aerospace and SpaceX were credited to better measurement rather than more hiring, the increase would still be roughly **6%**. That makes three consecutive months of comparable growth. Every reading in a series this young remains **provisional**, and the Index is a defined sample built for comparability rather than a county-wide census (scope notes in the appendix).

Three themes stand out. **The anchors keep adding capacity.** Blue Origin added another 76 tracked openings, to 712, which is 39% of the entire Index. L3Harris added 26, to 344. SpaceX's Cape board, now fully readable, stands at 106. **Lockheed Martin is back, and the number is larger than the migration hid.** Its new careers platform shows **73 Brevard-linked openings**, 56 of them with a Brevard site as the primary location. The single biggest block is **25 requisitions at Kennedy Space Center, nearly all Orion integration and test**, the most program-specific hiring signal the Index has produced so far. **The county's official numbers have caught up with the postings.** The fresh QCEW data shows Brevard's aerospace-manufacturing employment up **13% year over year** in March, to 10,341, with average weekly wages in the sector up 5.7%.

The flagship also delivers two answers the contractor tier has been waiting on. **NASA exercised the two-year option on the KSC ground-systems (COMET) contract**, extending Amentum's period of performance to September 2028. The public record shows it was exercised as a **deductive** option, preceded by a workforce directive and followed by a descope modification, and Amentum's local postings have fallen from about 35 to about 23. The contractor tier now has a longer runway and a smaller footprint. After three clean months, **the WARN watch has an entry again.** Astrion filed a 16-employee notice at Patrick AFB, effective September 30, alongside a larger notice at Eglin. The timing is consistent with a contract turnover at the fiscal year-end, though the company has not stated the cause. The signal in the tracked sample remains **expansion-leaning**, with the base-and-range tier the exception.

This month at a glance¹

This month at a glance. Sources in footnote 1.

Indicator	Reading	Note
Open A&D roles in the Index (21-company watch list)	1,844 ▲	+149 vs August (+9.2%) on the comparable basis (ex-Lockheed re-baseline, ex-Extant); provisional
Top-5 share of tracked roles	~89%	Blue Origin, Northrop, L3Harris, SpaceX, Lockheed (Lockheed re-enters the top 5 on its re-baselined count)
Biggest movers (tracked)	Blue Origin +76, L3Harris +26; Amentum –12	Anchors up; base-and-range contractor tier down
Brevard aerospace mfg. employment (QCEW)	10,341 (Mar 2026) ▲	+13% year over year; avg. weekly wage \$2,948 (+5.7%); quarterly refresh
Major award headlines	~\$193M KSC facilities; COMET extended	Kiewit \$90.3M duct-bank award (Jul 15) leads the KSC facilities wave; COMET Option 1 exercised as a deductive modification (Aug 19), period now to Sep 2028
National aerospace mfg. employment	594,500 (Jul, prelim.) ▲	+4.6% year over year; another decade-plus high

Indicator	Reading	Note
Cape launch cadence	56 YTD (through Sep 22)	Roman launched Aug 30; Crew-13 slipped to October; September the quietest month of the year so far
Major WARN / layoff notices (Brevard A&D)	Astrion, Patrick AFB: 16	Filed Aug 28, effective Sep 30; first A&D-sector filing in four months
Hiring outlook (tracked sample)	Expansion-leaning ▲	Third straight month of comparable Index growth; contractor tier the exception

Space Coast Openings Index

The Openings Index is this report's primary monthly metric: a same-date count of open aerospace and defense roles across a fixed list of Space Coast employers, compiled primarily from official company sources, with disclosed aggregator-based methods where official systems were unavailable (each employer's method is listed in the appendix count sheet).

Scope note: the Index is a **fixed-list sample built for month-to-month comparability. It is not a census of every A&D opening in Brevard County.** This quarter's list review (detailed below) takes the list from 23 names to **21, all with active Brevard operations.** All share and concentration figures describe the tracked sample, not the whole local market. Full scope detail and methodology are in the appendix.²

This month's count

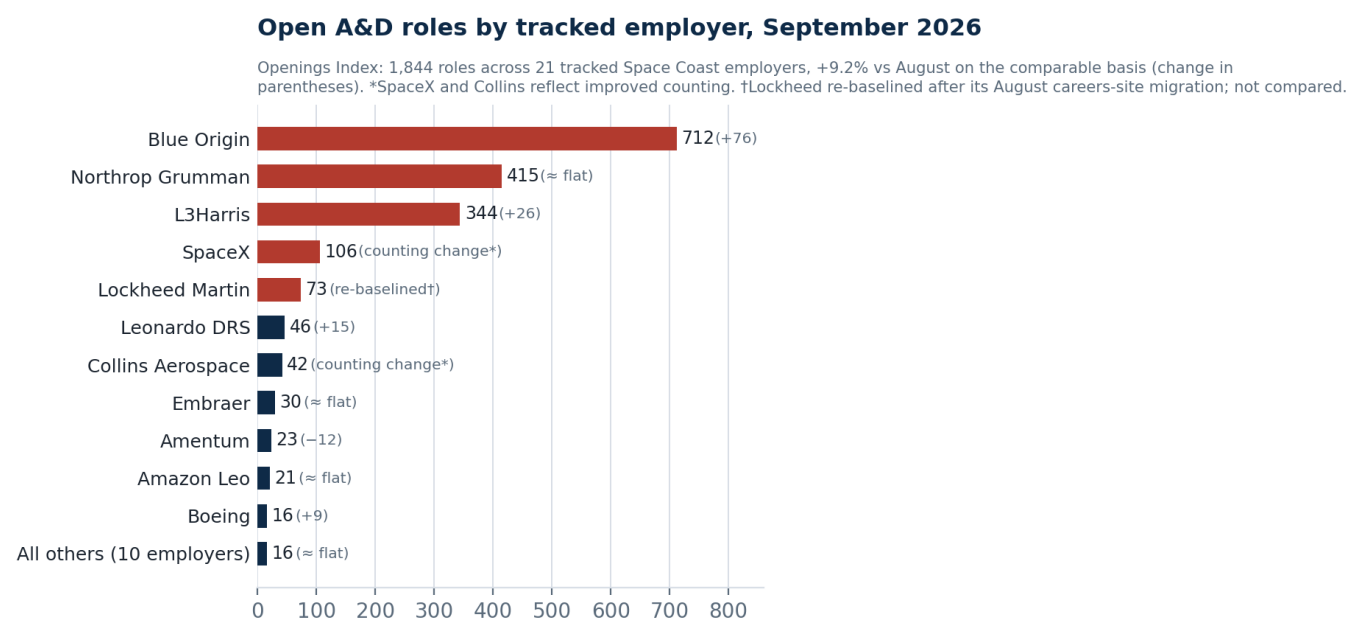
1,844 open A&D roles across the 21 tracked employers (counted September 22, 2026). On the comparable basis, excluding Lockheed Martin (re-baselined this month) and Extant Aerospace (added this month) from both months, tracked openings rose **from 1,614 to 1,763, up about 149 roles, or 9.2%.** Two counting improvements flatter that figure at the margin. A direct query of RTX's hiring system now captures Collins Aerospace requisitions posted to more than one site (26 to 42), and SpaceX's full Cape Canaveral board is readable for the first time (about 75 to 106). If every point of both increases were treated as measurement rather than hiring, the like-for-like move would still be roughly **100 roles, or 6%.** All readings are **provisional**, as every early-series reading is.

The Lockheed re-baseline. Last month Lockheed Martin's careers-site migration took its legacy postings offline and left a partially repopulated board showing 16 Brevard openings. We printed 16, marked the series broken, and promised a re-baseline. The new platform has now finished repopulating. At our September 22 pull it showed **73 openings linked to a Brevard location: 56 with a Brevard site as the primary location (Titusville 26, Kennedy Space Center 25, Cape Canaveral 3, Patrick SFB 2) and 17 more posted to multiple sites including one in Brevard.** Every one of the 73 was posted on or after August 14, the day the

new board went live, which confirms that August's 16 was the migration in progress rather than a collapse in hiring. We print **73** as the September reading, on the same basis as our other multi-site employers, and treat it as the **new baseline**. It is excluded from this month's change math and returns to the month-over-month arithmetic in October. Two cautions. First, 73 is below the 112 we counted on the old platform in July, so some of the pre-migration level was probably stale postings the old board never cleared. Second, the composition has changed, with the KSC Orion block now the largest single cluster (see *What's driving the number* and this month's Spotlight).

The quarterly list review. Three names leave the list: **Space Perspective** (ceased operations), **Rocket Lab** and **Terran Orbital** (no Brevard site; Terran Orbital's revived hiring is California-only). All three contributed zero roles in every issue, so their removal changes no prior figure. One name joins: **Extant Aerospace** (Melbourne), which broke ground on a \$75M, 376,000-sq-ft plant in July, won a \$14.2M Navy component order in August, and posted 8 Brevard openings this month. It is counted from September and excluded from the change math this once. **Beyond Gravity** stays (Titusville plant active, 1 opening). Two names sit on a watch list and are not counted: **All Points** (Merritt Island headquarters; its new processing work is at Vandenberg and KSC) and **Relativity Space** (Titusville campus identified, not finalized). The list is now 21 employers, every one with active Brevard operations.

By employer (top of the list)



Source: official company careers sites (aggregator-based where official systems were unavailable; see appendix count sheet), counted September 22, 2026.

Openings Index by employer, compiled primarily from official company careers sites, with disclosed aggregator-based methods where noted (see appendix count sheet); counted September 22, 2026.

Employer	Sep	Aug	Change	Primary Space Coast site
Blue Origin	712	636	▲ +76	Merritt Island (New Glenn, Blue Moon)

Employer	Sep	Aug	Change	Primary Space Coast site
Northrop Grumman	415	~422	≈ flat	Melbourne (E-2D, space and missile systems)
L3Harris	344	318	▲ +26	Palm Bay + Melbourne
SpaceX	106*	~75	* counting change	Cape Canaveral (Starship, Falcon)
Lockheed Martin	73†	16	† re-baselined	Titusville + KSC + Cape Canaveral
Leonardo DRS	46	31	▲ +15 (14 are 2027 internships)	Melbourne (electro-optical/infrared)
Collins Aerospace	42*	26	* counting change	Melbourne (avionics)
Embraer	30	31	≈ flat	Melbourne (executive jet assembly)
Amentum	~23	~35	▼ -12	KSC ground systems + Eastern Range
Amazon Leo (form. Kuiper)	21	20	≈ flat	Merritt Island (satellite processing)
Boeing	16	7	▲ +9 (3 Brevard-primary)	Titusville (test and evaluation)
Extant Aerospace	8	new	added this quarter	Melbourne (aerospace electronics)
Custom Aerospace	2	3	▼ -1	Palm Bay
KBR	2	1	▲ +1	Patrick SFB (AFTAC support)
Leidos	2	3	▼ -1	Merritt Island / KSC
Beyond Gravity	1	2	▼ -1	Titusville (satellite panels)
Jacobs	1	3	▼ -2	Cape Canaveral (ports and maritime engineering)

*The remaining tracked companies (Sierra Space, Redwire, Bechtel, Space Coast Composite Processing) posted no Brevard openings this month. *SpaceX and Collins Aerospace reflect improved counting (see appendix), not necessarily more hiring; treat both levels as new baselines. †Lockheed's series was broken by a careers-platform migration in August; 73 is the re-baselined September reading and is not compared to August (see "The Lockheed re-baseline" above).*

What's driving the number

Blue Origin holds two-fifths of the Index and is staffing every shift. Another 76 tracked openings (636 to 712) as the company hires straight through its New Glenn stand-down. The mix is production-heavy. By our keyword count, roughly 334 titles are engineering, 142 are technician and trades, and **113 carry an explicit**

shift tag (A/B shifts on Blue Moon lunar-hardware manufacturing, "all shifts" on test-and-launch operations). Company-wide the board stands at 1,673 openings, so the Space Coast now accounts for about 43% of Blue Origin's total hiring.

L3Harris set another Index high, and this month its board shows what it is hiring for. Up 26 tracked roles (318 to 344) within 25 miles of Melbourne: Palm Bay 155, Melbourne 87, Malabar 18, Patrick SFB 10, Cape Canaveral 3, plus 71 postings shared with other L3Harris sites. For the first time the site published per-posting categories: engineering 154, program, contracts, quality and supply 63, corporate and support functions 78, manufacturing 14, and **35 co-op, intern, and new-grad postings**. The 2027 early-career cycle opened in the same month DRS posted its 13 summer internships.

Northrop held steady at a very high level. The Melbourne default view read 415 (versus about 422 in August), the Melbourne city facet 353 (versus 366), with 8 Cape Canaveral and Merritt Island-tagged requisitions. Flat at about 415 keeps Melbourne among the busiest A&D hiring campuses in the country. It is the E-2D engineering home, and July's roughly \$1.2B order assigned its largest work share here.

SpaceX's Cape board is now fully readable, and it is 106 deep. The company's hiring system exposed its complete Cape Canaveral requisition list this month (the per-office data path we could only partially read in August), so 106 is a hard count rather than a range: 38 engineering, 30 trades and technician, and 17 titles tagged night shift or shift-flexible. Starship ground-infrastructure titles still run through the list (welders, electricians, pad and tower technicians), alongside a growing block of cryogenics and industrial-gas supply-chain roles. Because the August figure of about 75 was a bounded estimate, we print the increase of 31 as a counting change rather than growth. The level is the new baseline.

Lockheed's re-baselined 73 has the month's most notable composition. The 56 Brevard-primary postings split Titusville 26 (Trident II production support, software, financial management), **KSC 25, all but a handful Orion integration and test (test engineers, flight operations, ground-systems engineers, three of them tagged second shift or Friday through Monday)**, Cape Canaveral 3, and Patrick 2. This is the Artemis III ground crew being hired in public view, and it is the subject of this month's Spotlight.

The supplier tier is mixed, and the mix matters more than the totals. Leonardo DRS rose from 31 to 46, but 14 of the 46 are Summer 2027 internships. The professional core (32) is up modestly, still program- and supply-chain-heavy, with a single second-shift trades opening. Collins Aerospace's 42 is mostly a counting improvement (the direct query of RTX's hiring system now catches requisitions posted to more than one site), but the list is real and engineering-led (27 of 42), with **10 second-shift or weekend titles** (test technicians, production associates, a manufacturing engineer). Embraer held at 30 with the strongest trades skew in the sample, and **15 of its 30 openings are on second shift or weekends**. The delivery push continues. Amazon Leo held at 21 (8 second-shift), with five new Merritt Island postings on September 10 and 11, including two launch-security evaluators at KSC.

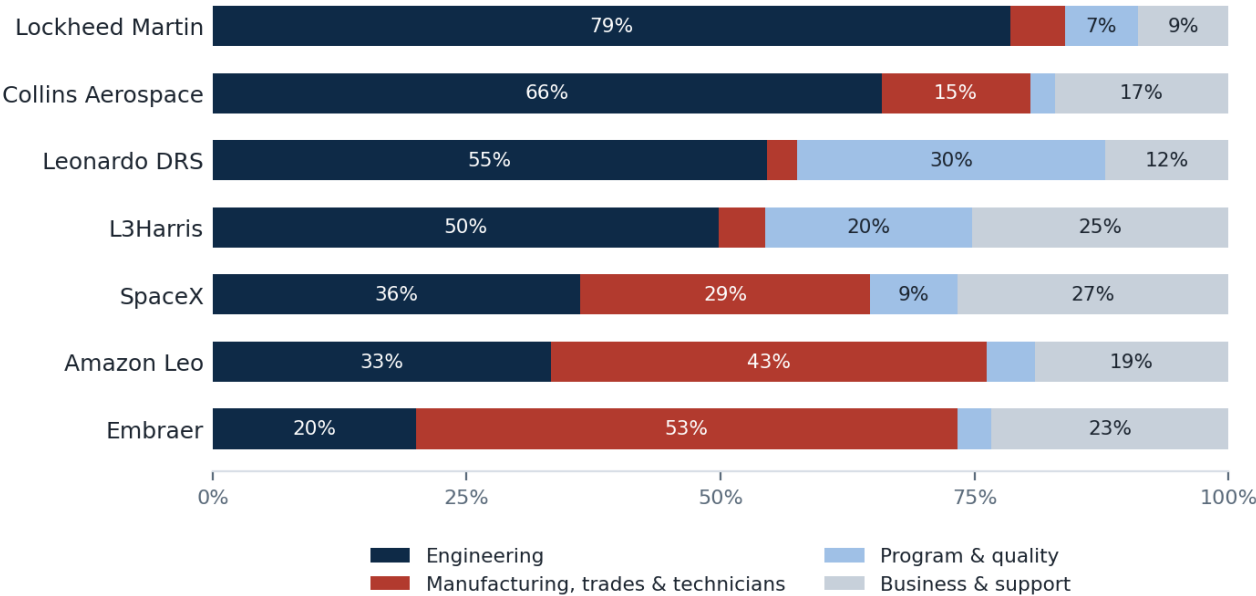
Boeing's local count rose, with a qualifier. Sixteen postings sit within 50 miles of Cape Canaveral, up from 7, but only 3 are Brevard-primary (all Titusville test-and-evaluation engineering roles). The rest are multi-site systems-engineering requisitions and Summer 2027 internships that list Titusville among many locations. There are still no Starliner titles. The Titusville T&E roles are a genuine, if small, new signal.

The contractor tier stepped down, and this quarter the public record explains why. Amentum's Brevard postings fell from about 35 to about 23 (KSC 14, Cocoa Beach range roles 8, Cape Canaveral 1). The company's careers site was offline for the entire pull window (a certificate failure, not a block), so the count is built from Amentum's own syndicated job feed cross-checked on Indeed, and it is labeled Medium-high confidence. It lines up with the COMET record. NASA exercised the contract's two-year option on August 19 as a **deductive** modification, after an August 6 "Phase I workforce directive" and before a September 11 "descope of requirements" (see Contracts). Jacobs' single Cape Canaveral posting is a ports-and-maritime structural engineer, which is civil work rather than spaceport operations. KBR's 2 are AFTAC geophysics roles at Patrick.

By role family

Who is hiring hands-on vs. engineering talent, September 2026

Share of each employer's Space Coast openings by role family, seven tracked employers with usable category data this month (L3Harris and Lockheed Martin join; internship postings excluded). Sorted by engineering share.



Source: official careers-site postings, September 22, 2026, seven employers with usable category data.

Seven tracked employers published usable role-category detail this month. L3Harris joins the chart for the first time now that its site exposes per-posting categories, and Lockheed Martin joins on its re-baselined list. Blue Origin's keyword-based mix (above) is not directly comparable to the enumerated lists and stays out of the chart. Amentum rotates out while its official site is offline.

Across the employers whose postings break down by category, demand splits into the same four broad families:

- **Engineering** remains the largest category at the primes: L3Harris 154 of 344, Collins 27 of 42, SpaceX 38 of 106, Lockheed's KSC Orion block, and roughly 334 engineering-keyword roles at Blue Origin.
- **Skilled trades and technicians** stay broad: 16 of Embraer's 30, 9 of Amazon Leo's 21, 30 of SpaceX's 106, and roughly 142 technician-keyword postings at Blue Origin.

- **Program, quality and supply chain** roles (program managers, planners, contracts, quality and mission assurance) are heaviest at L3Harris (63) and DRS (10 of the 32 professional roles).
- **Early-career pipelines opened this month.** At least **83 co-op, intern, and new-grad postings** appeared across L3Harris (35), Blue Origin (34), and DRS (13), nearly all for Summer 2027. This is the earliest we have seen the next-year cycle post.

The shift signal roughly doubled. Last month's Spotlight counted at least 30 explicitly shift-tagged postings across five employers. This month the same explicit-tag test finds **51 across five employers (Embraer 15, SpaceX 17, Collins 10, Amazon Leo 8, DRS 1), plus 3 at Lockheed's KSC Orion block and 113 at Blue Origin.** That is more than 160 tracked postings advertising second-shift, weekend, night, or multi-shift schedules.

Likely among the hardest to fill this month: Orion and spacecraft integration and test engineers with Kennedy processing experience, experienced assembly and test technicians willing to work non-standard shifts, certified A&P mechanics, and cleared engineers. This reflects recurring requirements in tracked postings and Intrepidus's recruiting experience rather than measured time-to-fill data.

Contracts & the Demand Signal

Federal contract awards are a directional signal of future hiring, since work awarded today is staffed over the following quarters. Tracking awards performed on the Space Coast, from public federal records, is one of this report's differentiators. This is the quarterly census issue: every figure below carries its USASpending award ID.³

Every figure is checked for **where the work is actually performed**. We count Brevard-performed work as the local signal, and we say so plainly when a local company's win will be executed elsewhere. Standing caveat: a Brevard place of performance establishes local relevance, but it does **not** by itself prove incremental local hiring. Existing staff, subcontractors, remote workers, or non-labor spending may absorb part of the work.

The scale, refreshed: 4,182 federal contract records carry a Brevard County place of performance with activity in fiscal year 2026 (October 1, 2025 through our September 22 pull). This replaces June's 2,525, which was pulled mid-year on a narrower activity window. The two figures are not a growth series, and the fiscal-year-to-date definition is now the fixed one for future quarters. The records span Navy aircraft, ballistic-missile production, NASA spaceflight, and the operation of the spaceport itself.

The anchor programs (largest active prime-award records)

Largest active Brevard prime-award records with award IDs. USASpending.gov, September 22, 2026 (quarterly refresh).

Awardee	Program	Obligations	Award ID	Where
Northrop Grumman	E-2D Hawkeye, FRP 7 (Navy)	\$8.49B	N0001918C1037	Melbourne (design and engineering); final production in St. Augustine
Northrop Grumman	E-2D Hawkeye, FRP 2 (Navy)	\$5.38B	N0001913C9999	Melbourne / St. Augustine
SpaceX	Commercial Crew (NASA)	\$3.03B	NNK17MA01T	Kennedy Space Center
Lockheed Martin	FY25 Trident II production (Navy)	\$2.95B	N0003024C0100	Titusville
L3Harris	NOAA ground systems	\$1.83B	DOCDG133E09CN0094	Palm Bay / Melbourne
L3Harris (Harris)	FAA telecom (DAFIS)	\$1.59B	DTFA0102D03006, call 0001	Melbourne
Amentum Spaceport	KSC BOSS base operations (NASA)	\$650M	80KSC018C0017	Kennedy Space Center
Boeing	Commercial Crew / Starliner (NASA)	\$361M	NNK15MA50T	Kennedy Space Center

Each line is a single USASpending **prime-award record**, shown as total obligations to date on that record as of September 22, 2026. Large programs span multiple records. Lockheed's Trident work, for example, appears on five annual production contracts totaling more than \$8B, so a program's full value can be far larger than any one line. These figures show where federal money is anchored. They are **not** program totals, ceilings, or single-year local spend.

The COMET outcome: extended, and reduced

The biggest marker we flagged for the contractor tier has resolved, and the public record is specific. The KSC ground-systems contract (**COMET, 80KSC023DA016**, awarded to Jacobs Technology in 2023 and held by **Amentum** since Jacobs' critical-mission-solutions business merged into Amentum in 2024) was due to reach the end of its base period on September 30. The modification log on USASpending now shows:

- **August 6, P00130: "Phase I, Workforce Directive."**
- **August 19, P00133: "Deductive, Option 01 Exercise."** The period of performance now runs to **September 30, 2028.**
- **September 11, P00138: "Descope of Requirements."**

(Last issue's "unexplained August 12 modification" turned out to be a \$723 funding adjustment.) Total obligations on the contract stand at \$1.24B against a \$2.24B base-and-options value. **Read together, the record says NASA kept the incumbent for two more years and cut the scope while doing so.** That is the most direct available explanation for Amentum's Brevard postings falling from about 35 to about 23 this month, and it changes our framing from August. The contractor tier's June reset was structural, and the option exercise has now made the smaller footprint the plan of record through 2028. What "Phase I" implies about later phases is not public. We will keep reading the modification log.

Award headlines, the forward signal (June 16 to September 22)

The quarter's story is **facilities at Kennedy**: roughly **\$193 million in new NASA construction and infrastructure awards** performed at KSC, the largest such wave we have logged.

- **Kiewit Infrastructure South, \$90.3M, KSC underground duct bank and electrical distribution modernization (awarded July 15; 80KSC026C0004).** The spaceport's power backbone.
- **Healtheon, \$33.1M, KSC sewage-conveyance system, Phase 1 (August 6; 80KSC026F7021) and \$20.0M, pumphouse design-build at the Orbiter Processing Facility (July 27; 80KSC026F7020).**
- **Civil Works Contracting, \$29.4M, industrial-water pumping station (July 22; 80KSC026F7018).**
- **Sauer, \$16.2M modification, converter-compressor facility work for SLS Block 1 (August 7; 80KSC020C0013).**
- **Aleut, \$4.1M, VAB roof drains (September 11; 80KSC026F0016).**

Taken together, this is a spaceport being re-plumbed and re-wired while Artemis III hardware is stacked inside it. The work means construction-trades demand (electricians, pipefitters, heavy civil) that sits outside our Index sample but inside the county's labor market.

Funding also flowed into existing Brevard awards. We log these as **prior awards, not new wins**:

- **L3Harris: \$73.6M obligated this quarter** (\$31.7M on June 29, \$41.9M on September 4) on its **FAA Surveillance and Broadcast Services II contract (693KA726C00059)**, a five-year, \$1.12B-ceiling award made **April 24, 2026** with a Melbourne place of performance.
- **Blue Origin: \$13.2M obligated August 6** on two **NASA CLPS task orders, CX-2A and CX-2B (80JSC026F7013 and 80JSC026F7015)**, awarded **May 26, 2026** for Blue Moon lunar-lander missions, with Merritt Island as the place of performance and periods running to August 2027.

One item excluded on purpose: a \$438M Northrop Grumman transaction dated June 16 on a 2019 Navy/DLA E-2D radar-spares contract (SPRPA119FE31N) is an administrative name-change modification, not new money.

Why it matters for hiring: the quarter's signal is *infrastructure and continuity*. Kennedy's facilities are getting a generational upgrade, COMET has a two-year extension at reduced scope, and obligations are steady on the region's largest FAA and lunar-lander awards. Industry experience suggests awards translate into related postings over subsequent quarters. This report does not yet measure that local award-to-posting lag.

Out for bid, the earliest signal

With COMET decided, the next markers for the contractor tier are NASA KSC's support-services recompetes (engineering services, fire, and protective services), which remain in evaluation, and the Space Force Range Contract's ongoing transition at the Eastern Range, where Amentum's Cocoa Beach range-engineering postings (8 this month) are the visible surface. The December flagship carries the next solicitation review.

What the Market Pays

Salary benchmarks are among the data most requested by both job seekers and hiring managers. This quarter adds the county wage series to the occupational benchmarks.⁴

New this quarter: the county wage data

The BLS County Employment and Wages series (QCEW) released its first-quarter 2026 data on August 28. It is the first hard county-level reading of the aerospace expansion that the Openings Index has been tracking in postings.

Brevard County wages and employment by industry. BLS QCEW, first quarter 2026 vs first quarter 2025, private sector.

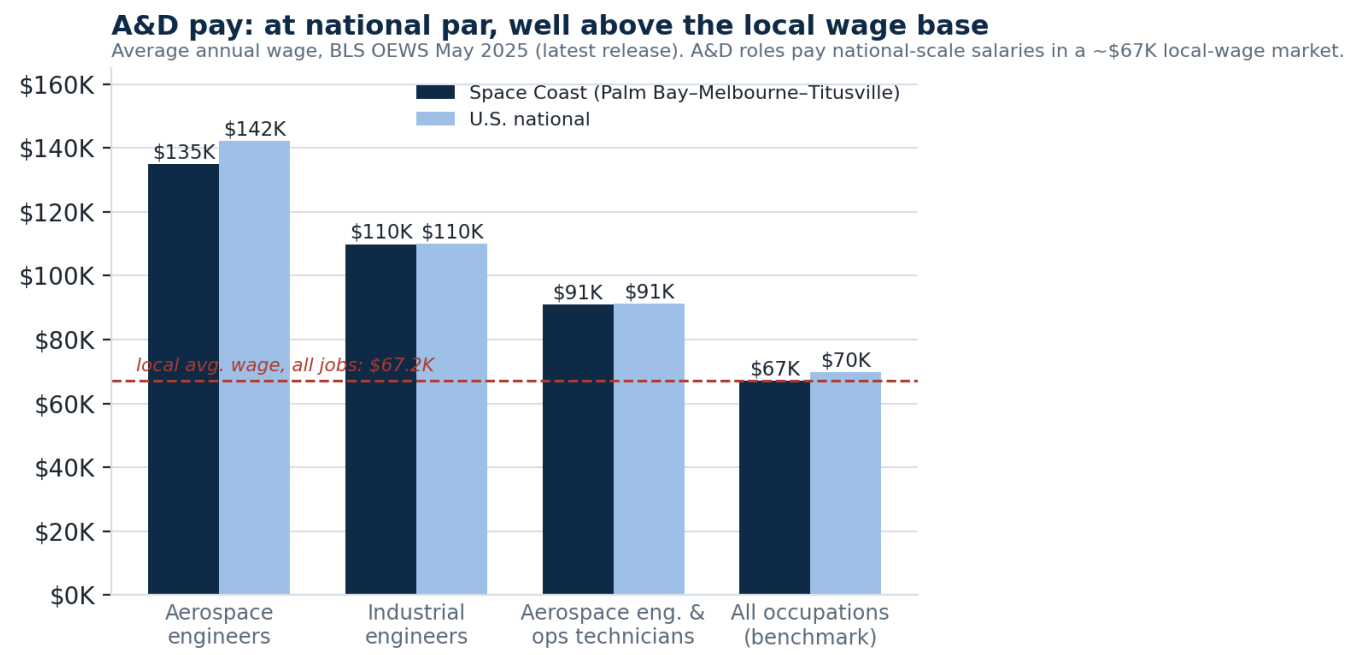
Brevard County, private sector (Q1 2026)	Jobs (Mar 2026)	vs. Mar 2025	Avg. weekly wage	vs. Q1 2025
Aerospace product and parts manufacturing (NAICS 3364)	10,341	+13%	\$2,948	+5.7%
of which guided missile and space vehicle mfg. (336414)	8,297	+15%	\$3,003	+3.5%
Search, detection and navigation instruments (334511)	6,545	+1%	\$3,121	+1.8%
Engineering services (541330)	6,536	-1%	\$2,455	+5.5%
All industries	216,296	+1%	\$1,522	+7.5%

Three things the numbers say. First, **the growth is real and it is in production.** Brevard's aerospace-manufacturing payrolls added roughly 1,200 jobs in a year, almost all of it in the missile-and-space-vehicle line where Blue Origin, SpaceX, and Lockheed's Titusville operation sit. With the establishment count moving only from 42 to 43, this is existing plants adding headcount rather than new entrants. Second, **the county is a large share of the state's space industry.** Florida's NAICS 3364 employment was 36,399 in March, so Brevard alone is about **28%** of it. Third, **pay is at national scale.** The sector's average weekly wage of \$2,948 (about

\$153,000 annualized) is 97% of the national average for the same industry (\$3,043) and nearly **twice** the county's all-industry average of \$1,522. One reading note: first-quarter wages include bonus season, so the comparison is strictly Q1 to Q1.

The occupational benchmarks (unchanged official data)

The occupational figures below are the official BLS Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics for the **Palm Bay–Melbourne–Titusville metro** (May 2025, still the latest release; the next annual update arrives in spring 2027), shown as the **average annual wage** and compared to the **national** average for the same occupation.



Source: [BLS Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics](#), May 2025, Palm Bay–Melbourne–Titusville metro and U.S.

Average annual wages. BLS OEWS, May 2025 (Palm Bay–Melbourne–Titusville metro vs U.S.).

Occupation	Local avg. wage	National avg.	Local employment
Computer hardware engineers	\$149,930	n/a	500
Aerospace engineers	\$134,950	\$142,060	1,360
Electronics engineers	\$125,770	n/a	970
Industrial engineers	\$109,840	\$109,900	2,030
Aerospace engineering and operations technicians	\$91,030	\$91,310	480
Aircraft mechanics and service technicians	\$71,960	n/a	660
Machinists	\$57,500	n/a	560
All occupations (local benchmark)	\$67,210	\$69,770	245,170

The standing story: premium jobs, not just premium pay

Space Coast aerospace wages sit close to the national average for the same jobs. Local aerospace engineers (\$134,950) run a touch *below* the national mean (\$142,060), and aerospace technicians (\$91,030) and industrial engineers (\$109,840) sit essentially *at* it. What makes this a premium market is the comparison **against the local economy**. An aerospace engineer earns about **2×** the local all-occupation mean of \$67,210, an industrial engineer about **1.6×**, and an aerospace technician about **35% more**. The new county series says the same thing from the other direction (the aerospace-manufacturing average weekly wage is nearly twice the county's) and adds that the local wage base itself is rising fast, up 7.5% year over year. One boundary: wages are not a cost-of-living measure, and this report does not yet publish one (a regional-price benchmark is planned).

vs. national, the benchmark line

The U.S. average wage is **\$142,060 for aerospace engineers** and **\$91,310 for aerospace engineering and operations technicians** (BLS OEWS, May 2025). The national aerospace-manufacturing average weekly wage is **\$3,043** (QCEW, Q1 2026). The Space Coast pays right in line on all three, which is competitive enough to recruit nationally, in a market whose overall wage base sits well below those salaries.

This Month on the Space Coast

A fast-moving roundup of the developments that move the local labor market, refreshed every issue so the report always has news, not just numbers.⁵

The month's defining story: Kennedy is being rebuilt while Artemis is stacked

Two things happened at Kennedy Space Center this quarter that rarely happen at the same time. NASA awarded roughly **\$193 million in facilities work** (new electrical backbone, industrial water, sewage conveyance, an OPF pumphouse, SLS compressor-facility upgrades, VAB roof drains; see Contracts) while inside the VAB the **Artemis III** stack kept growing. The crew visited Launch Complex 39A on September 3, and the mission, now a low-Earth-orbit crewed docking demonstration with SpaceX's Starship lander targeted no earlier than June 2027, has the boosters, core stage, and mated Orion in flow. Lockheed Martin's re-baselined board covers the workforce half of that story with **25 KSC postings, nearly all Orion integration and test**. Construction trades outside the fence, spacecraft-processing engineers inside it, and a ground-systems contractor extended at reduced scope: that combination is this month's Spotlight.

Program watch: the clocks moved

- **Roman Space Telescope: launched.** NASA's next flagship observatory lifted off on a Falcon Heavy from Launch Complex 39A on **August 30**, with the side boosters returning to Landing Zone 40. It was the Cape's marquee science launch of the year, and a clean one.

- **Crew-13 slipped to October.** The mission was targeting September 12 when NASA found an oxidizer leak in the Dragon spacecraft during processing (August 29). The valve was replaced on September 16 and the launch is now **no earlier than October 1** from Space Launch Complex 40.
- **New Glenn: no new public update.** Blue Origin's August 6 disclosure (a BE-4 main-oxygen-valve cause, a retrofittable fix, a two-pad rebuild of Launch Complex 36) remains the latest word. Return to flight is still targeted before the end of 2026. The hiring signal has not paused: 76 more tracked openings this month, 113 of the 712 explicitly shift-tagged.
- **Starliner-1** remains no earlier than the fourth quarter, with no committed date. Boeing's Brevard postings still carry no Starliner titles, though three new Titusville test-and-evaluation engineering roles appeared this month.

Hiring and expansion notes

- **Extant Aerospace joins the Index with 8 openings:** assemblers, a material handler, two test engineers, a buyer, an FP&A analyst, an operations manager, and a director of operations. That is the leadership-plus-floor hiring pattern of a company standing up a second plant. The Space Coast EDC puts the July groundbreaking at 376,000 sq ft, \$75M-plus, and roughly 200 new jobs.
- **The 2027 early-career cycle opened early.** At least 83 co-op, intern, and new-grad postings appeared across L3Harris (35), Blue Origin (34), and Leonardo DRS (13) this month, nearly all for Summer 2027. Students who wait for the spring career fair will find the biggest local programs already closed.
- **Amazon Leo posted its first launch-security roles at KSC** (two "launch security evaluator" positions, September 10 and 11) as the constellation's Cape launch future shifts onto Vulcan and New Glenn.
- **Relativity Space's Titusville campus is still identified, not finalized.** No change since July's announcement. It stays on the watch list.
- **Illumus's Titusville wind-down reaches its end date.** The manufacturer's February WARN notice (84 employees) runs through September 30, a reminder that the county's small-manufacturer bench has churn underneath the aerospace growth.

Launch cadence

The Cape logged 56 orbital launches year-to-date through September 22 by our tally, four of them in this issue's window: two Starlink flights (August 21 and 25), Roman on Falcon Heavy (August 30), and an O3b mPOWER mission on Falcon 9 (September 13). **September has been the quietest month of the year on the Eastern Range**, with one launch through the 22nd, as Crew-13 slipped, New Glenn stayed grounded, and ULA sat between missions. Against 2025's record 109, the Cape is now running roughly **30% behind last year's pace**. The fourth quarter holds the catch-up candidates: Crew-13 (NET October 1), New Glenn's return to flight, and ULA's first Dream Chaser flight. Launch tempo is generally associated with demand for integration, ground-systems, mission-operations, and trades roles, the kind of work concentrated in the contractor tier of the Index, though this report does not measure that relationship directly.

Layoff / WARN watch

The clean streak ended. Two Brevard notices appeared on Florida's official WARN list since our last issue. **Astrion, Patrick AFB: 16 employees, filed August 28, effective September 30**, alongside a 204-employee Astrion notice at Eglin AFB carrying the same dates. The fiscal-year-end timing and the paired filing are consistent with a contract turnover, and the company has not stated a cause. Outside A&D, **Health First filed a 215-employee notice in Rockledge (September 16)**. Watch items: **Amentum's post-option footprint** (the workforce directive and descope modifications are now on record), the fourth-quarter **Space Force Range Contract transition**, and **Boeing's post-Starliner local posture**.

Monthly Spotlight

THIS MONTH: Building for the Moon. Kennedy's \$193M facilities wave and the Orion hiring block

Each issue features one rotating deep-dive on a topic that shapes local A&D hiring. This quarter: what the public record says about the workforce behind Artemis III at Kennedy Space Center, who is hiring, who is being extended at reduced scope, and where the work sits in the county's labor market.⁶

Artemis III is usually described as a rocket. On the Space Coast it is better understood as a **worksite**, and this quarter, for the first time, the public record lets us see the worksite from three sides at once.

The spacecraft engineers. When Lockheed Martin's new careers platform finished repopulating, the largest single cluster on its Brevard list turned out to be **Kennedy Space Center, with 25 requisitions, all but a handful for Orion**, ahead of the Titusville missile plant. They cover test engineers, integration engineers, ground-systems and flight-operations engineers, three of them tagged for second shift or a Friday-through-Monday week. That is a program hiring to a schedule. Orion's crew and service modules were mated on July 30, the stack is in flow, and the processing work between now and a 2027 launch is measured in shifts. For an engineer with spacecraft-processing or ground-test experience, this is the most specific and most time-bound demand signal the Index has surfaced.

The ground-systems contractor. The people who stack the boosters and run the mobile launcher work for the COMET contractor, which has been Amentum since 2024. The contract's public modification log this quarter reads like a negotiation in three lines: a **workforce directive** (August 6), a **deductive option exercise** that extends the work to 2028 (August 19), and a **descope of requirements** (September 11). Amentum's Brevard postings fell from about 35 to about 23 over the same weeks. The plainest reading is that NASA secured continuity for Artemis III's ground crew through 2028 and reduced the scope it is paying for. For the contractor tier's technicians and engineers, that means stability at a smaller size, and it is why we now describe the tier's June reset as permanent rather than provisional.

The fence line. Outside the processing buildings, NASA awarded roughly **\$193 million** of facilities work at Kennedy in one quarter: a \$90M electrical duct-bank modernization, \$33M of sewage conveyance, a \$29M industrial-water pumping station, a \$20M pumphouse at the Orbiter Processing Facility, SLS compressor-facility upgrades, and VAB roof drains. None of it appears in our Index (the awardees are heavy-civil contractors, not aerospace employers). All of it lands in Brevard's construction-trades labor market over the next two to three years, and all of it is the kind of infrastructure a spaceport has to fix before it can launch at cadence.

What it means if you are hiring or job-hunting here:

- *Engineers (spacecraft integration, test, ground systems):* Lockheed's KSC block is posted, dated, and shift-specific. Apply against the schedule, and expect the Orion processing timeline to keep generating openings through 2027. Experience at Kennedy, Michoud, or a payload-processing facility is the differentiator.
- *Technicians and trades:* the contractor tier is smaller but extended (COMET work is stable through 2028), while the facilities wave opens two to three years of electrical, mechanical, and heavy-civil work at the Center that most aerospace job boards will never show you. Look at the awardees, not just the primes.
- *Hiring managers competing for the same people:* Lockheed is now hiring Orion engineers on second-shift and four-day-week schedules. If your test-and-integration roles are still day-shift only, you are recruiting from a shrinking pool. The shift-tag count across the Index roughly doubled this month. It is becoming the norm.

National Context: U.S. vs. the Space Coast

The Space Coast is a small slice of a very large national industry. Setting the local market against the national backdrop shows what makes Brevard distinctive: it pays A&D occupations well above the local wage base, it sits in the path of federal defense spending, and it is adding capacity.⁷

U.S. aerospace and defense supports **approximately 2.1 million jobs** (about **930,000 direct**) and generated **\$988.6 billion in sales** in 2025, contributing **\$500 billion in economic value** (1.6% of U.S. GDP) and paying **\$266 billion** in labor income, an average wage **above \$127,000, roughly 40% higher than the national average** (AIA 2026 Facts and Figures, 2025 data). Direct manufacturing employment splits almost evenly between commercial aerospace (51%) and defense and national security (49%). On the federal demand side, Congress enacted **\$839 billion** in FY2026 Department of Defense appropriations, and the procurement emphasis on **missiles and space** keeps aligning with visible Brevard strengths.

The national trend line

U.S. aerospace manufacturing employment is climbing

All employees, aerospace product & parts mfg. (NAICS 3364), seasonally adjusted, monthly.
Full official series, BLS CES. July 2026 preliminary; June 2026 revised.



Source: [BLS Current Employment Statistics, series CES3133640001](#), July 2026 preliminary; June 2026 revised to 591,400.

The national industry keeps climbing. U.S. aerospace manufacturing employment reached a preliminary **594,500 in July 2026**, the **highest level in at least a decade of published data**, up about **26,000 jobs (4.6%) over 12 months** and rising every month of 2026 so far (BLS; June revised to 591,400 from the 591,600 we printed last month). This quarter the county series lets us make the comparison on the same footing for the first time. **Brevard's aerospace-manufacturing employment grew 13% year over year in March against the national industry's 4.6%, roughly three times the national rate.**

The benchmark snapshot

National vs. Space Coast benchmarks. BLS, AIA 2026 Facts and Figures, this issue's Openings Index.

Metric	National (U.S.)	Space Coast	Takeaway
Aerospace mfg. employment trend	+4.6% year over year (Jul, CES)	+13% year over year (Mar, QCEW)	County growing about 3× the national rate
Aerospace mfg. avg. weekly wage (QCEW, Q1 2026)	\$3,043	\$2,948	97% of national par; about 2× the county's all-industry wage
Aerospace engineer pay (avg)	\$142,060	\$134,950	Near national par; about 2× the local average wage
Aerospace technician pay (avg)	\$91,310	\$91,030	At national par; above the local wage base

Metric	National (U.S.)	Space Coast	Takeaway
Federal demand backdrop	~\$839B FY26 DoD approps	~\$193M KSC facilities awards; COMET extended to 2028	Civil-space infrastructure landing locally

Employment comparisons use different months and series (national CES July; county QCEW March) and are directional only.

Bottom line: the region pays national-scale A&D salaries against a local wage base of about \$67,000. Its aerospace-manufacturing employment is growing roughly three times as fast as the national industry, which is itself at a decade-plus high. Its space-and-missile work sits squarely in current federal budget priorities, and the county's civil-space infrastructure is being rebuilt for the next decade of launches. Taken together, these read as favorable conditions for recruiting and relocation, an interpretation we keep testing against the monthly data.

Get the Report Every Month

This report is published monthly by **Intrepidus Talent Solutions**, a specialist aerospace and defense staffing firm serving Florida's Space Coast. We place the engineers, technicians, and cleared professionals the region's top employers depend on.

Subscribe free at intrepidus-ts.com

Reach out any time for hiring support or a confidential talent-market consultation: intrepidus-ts.com.

Appendix & Methodology

How this report stays fresh

Most foundational data (employment, wages, total industry size) changes slowly. To stay current without manufacturing false movement, the report is built in two layers on a hybrid schedule:

- **Fresh layer:** the Openings Index, contract awards and pipeline, news roundup, launch cadence, and the rotating Spotlight. These change every issue and lead the report.
- **Backbone layer:** employment, wages, and national benchmarks. These anchor credibility and are refreshed when official data is released, not forced monthly.

A light **monthly pulse** runs every month. A deeper **quarterly flagship** (BLS-anchored) lands in September, December, March, and June. This is the first flagship. It carries the quarterly contract-census refresh (with award IDs), the Q1 2026 county wage data, the COMET outcome, and the quarterly company-list review. The next flagship is December.

Methodology and sources

- **Openings Index: a defined-sample metric.** Open roles are counted from a fixed list of **21 named Space Coast A&D employers** (anchors, suppliers, and base/range contractors), compiled **primarily from each company's official careers site** across all Brevard County locations on a fixed date (September 22, 2026), **cross-checked against Indeed**, with disclosed aggregator-based methods for the employers whose official systems were unavailable (this month: Amentum, Jacobs, Extant Aerospace, Custom Aerospace; see the count sheet for each employer's method). The same list is used every month so the trend is comparable, and it is reviewed quarterly. The Index is **not** a census of all county-wide A&D openings. NASA and Space Force civil-service and military roles, third-party staffing listings, and employers not on the list are excluded by design. Share figures (for example the top-five ~89%) describe the tracked sample, not the whole market.
- **The Lockheed Martin re-baseline (September 2026):** Lockheed migrated its careers platform in mid-August (lockheedmartinjobs.com to lockheedmartin.eightfold.ai). August's 16 was a partially repopulated board and was excluded from that month's change math. At the September 22 pull the new platform showed 73 requisitions linked to a Brevard location (56 Brevard-primary; 17 multi-site including a Brevard location), every one posted on or after August 14. September's 73 is printed as the new baseline and excluded from this month's change math. Lockheed rejoins the month-over-month arithmetic in October. Because the old platform's July count (112) may have included stale postings the new board never carried over, no growth or decline is inferred from 112 to 73.
- **The quarterly list review (September 2026):** removed Space Perspective, Rocket Lab, Terran Orbital (no current Brevard operations or postings; zero roles in every prior issue, so no prior figure changes). Added Extant Aerospace (Melbourne), counted from September and excluded from this month's change math. Retained Beyond Gravity (Titusville plant active). Watch list, not counted: All Points, Relativity Space.
- **Wages:** [BLS Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics \(OEWS\)](#), May 2025 (latest release), Palm Bay–Melbourne–Titusville metro and national, annual mean wages, like-for-like. County series from [BLS Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages \(QCEW\)](#), Brevard County (FIPS 12009), private ownership, first quarter 2026 (released August 28, 2026) compared with first quarter 2025, employment as the March monthly level and wages as the quarterly average weekly wage. Florida and national NAICS 3364 benchmarks from the same release.
- **Contracts:** [USASpending.gov](#) prime contract awards filtered to **Brevard County place of performance** (KSC awards appear under the "Orlando, FL 32899" ZIP but are physically performed at KSC in Brevard). Census: contract records with any activity between October 1, 2025 and September 22, 2026 (4,182), a fiscal-year-to-date definition that replaces June's mid-year window and will be used for every future quarterly refresh. Anchor table: total obligations to date on individual prime-award records as of September 22, 2026, with award IDs. Award headlines: USASpending transaction records with a Brevard place of performance, action dates June 16 to September 22, 2026, verified for

actual award date and **award ID**. Obligations on pre-existing awards are labeled as such. COMET modification titles are quoted from the USASpending transaction descriptions for contract 80KSC023DA016.

- **Layoff / WARN watch:** [Florida WARN Act filings](#), official FloridaCommerce list, checked September 22, 2026.
- **National context:** [AIA 2026 Facts and Figures](#) (2025 data); U.S. DoD FY2026 appropriations; BLS national [OEWS](#), [Current Employment Statistics series CES3133640001](#), and QCEW.
- **Reproducibility:** direct links for this issue's key claims appear in the footnotes, and a compact employer count sheet (count, prior month, method, and confidence for every tracked company) appears at the end of this appendix. Job postings churn daily, so Index counts are snapshots that may not be reproducible after the pull date. The full per-company count sheet (site facets and pull notes) is retained for every issue and is available on request via [intrepidus-ts.com](#).
- **Evidence standard:** role counts, wages, WARN filings, and federal award values are reported as observed data from public sources. Connections between awards, solicitations, and hiring are treated as directional indicators unless individual postings can be tied directly to a specific program. Where a figure is our own count (the Openings Index) or an estimate, it is labeled as such.

Section notes and sources (footnotes)

¹ **The Monthly Pulse.** Fourth issue; third month-over-month reading, labeled provisional. Figures are drawn from public sources (company career sites, USASpending.gov, BLS, Florida WARN filings, company and government announcements). Where a number is our own count, chiefly the Openings Index, or an estimate, it is labeled. The "~" prefix marks estimates and aggregator-based counts (Amentum) explained in footnote 2. The comparable-basis change excludes Lockheed Martin and Extant Aerospace from both months (August 1,630 – 16 = 1,614; September 1,844 – 73 – 8 = 1,763; +149 = +9.2%). The "roughly 6%" alternative additionally treats the entire Collins (+16) and SpaceX (+31) increases as counting improvements (about +102 on 1,614). Top-five share: 1,650 of 1,844.

² **Openings Index, scope and method.** The Index is a sample, not a census. Open roles are counted from a fixed, named list of 21 Space Coast A&D employers, compiled primarily from each company's official careers site, with disclosed aggregator-based methods where official systems were unavailable (see the count sheet), filtered to all Brevard County locations (Melbourne, Palm Bay, Malabar, Titusville, Cape Canaveral, Merritt Island, Rockledge, Cocoa, Cocoa Beach, Patrick SFB, Kennedy Space Center, Satellite Beach, West Melbourne), on a single fixed date (September 22, 2026). Multi-location postings where the Space Coast is one of several sites are included as posted (Blue Origin, Northrop, L3Harris, Boeing, and Lockheed totals run somewhat high for this reason). **September-specific notes:** *SpaceX (106)*: the company's Greenhouse hiring system now returns its complete job list, so the Cape Canaveral count is an exact filter on the official board (106 tagged Cape Canaveral; 11 "flexible/any site" postings excluded). August's ~75 was a bounded estimate from a partial data path, so the difference is treated as a counting change (method v3). *Collins Aerospace (42)*: counted by a direct location-facet query of RTX's official Workday hiring system across all five Melbourne building codes. This catches requisitions posted to more than one site that August's per-requisition verification did not enumerate, so it is a method change and not necessarily growth (9 of the 42 carry second-shift or weekend tags). *Northrop (415)*: careers site read live in a browser; default Melbourne view 415 (August ~422), Melbourne city facet 353 (August 366), 8 Cape Canaveral and Merritt Island-tagged. *Lockheed Martin (73)*: new

official platform, all Brevard-linked requisitions enumerated; see the re-baseline entry above. *Leonardo DRS (46)*: official site, Melbourne-listed only; 14 are Summer 2027 or Fall 2026 internship and co-op postings; one remote posting listing Melbourne among several sites excluded. *Embraer (30)*: official careers board, 28 Melbourne-tagged plus 2 multi-location postings verified to include Melbourne; 15 of 30 carry second-shift or weekend tags. *Amentum (~23)*: official site offline throughout the pull window (TLS certificate error, verified in a browser); count built from the company's own syndicated job feed (Kennedy Space Center 14; Cocoa Beach 11, of which 3 Ascension Island duty stations excluded; Cape Canaveral 1 via Indeed); Medium-high confidence. *Boeing (16)*: official site, 50-mile radius of Cape Canaveral; 3 Titusville-primary, 13 multi-site or internship postings listing a Brevard location. *KBR (2)*: official site filtered to Florida; the 80 "Melbourne" postings on its board are Melbourne, Australia and are excluded. *Extant Aerospace (8)*: no company careers board; Indeed enumeration (7 Melbourne, 1 Palm Bay). *Jacobs (1)* and *Custom Aerospace (2)*: Indeed (official boards unreadable or none). Role-family buckets are assigned from posting titles (and, for L3Harris, the site's own category labels). The role-mix chart covers seven employers with enumerated lists. Blue Origin's keyword-based mix is reported in text only.

³ **Contracts and the Demand Signal.** All award data from USASpending.gov as of September 22, 2026; award IDs as shown. Anchor table: prime-award records with Brevard County place of performance and FY2026 activity, sorted by total obligations. Lockheed's Trident work also appears on N0003025C0100 (\$1.30B), N0003023C0100 (\$1.28B), N0003020C0100 (\$1.22B), and N0003021C0100 (\$1.18B). COMET: IDV 80KSC023DA016, awarded May 1, 2023 to Jacobs Technology (NASA release, September 2023), recipient now Amentum Technology, Inc.; base-and-all-options \$2.24B; obligations \$1.24B; period of performance end date now September 30, 2028; modifications P00130 (2026-08-06, "PHASE I, WORKFORCE DIRECTIVE"), P00132 (2026-08-12, -\$722.96), P00133 (2026-08-19, "DEDUCTIVE, OPTION 01 EXERCISE"), P00138 (2026-09-11, "DESCOPE OF REQUIREMENTS"), descriptions as recorded. KSC facilities awards: Kiewit Infrastructure South Co., 80KSC026C0004, \$90.3M, July 15, 2026; Healthcon Inc., 80KSC026F7021, \$33.1M, August 6, 2026, and 80KSC026F7020, \$20.0M, July 27, 2026; Civil Works Contracting LLC, 80KSC026F7018, \$29.4M, July 22, 2026; Sauer Inc., 80KSC020C0013 modification, \$16.2M, August 7, 2026; Aleut, 80KSC026F0016, \$4.1M, September 11, 2026 (sum about \$193.1M). L3Harris FAA SBS II: 693KA726C00059, awarded April 24, 2026, base-and-options \$1.12B, Melbourne place of performance; obligations June 29 (\$31.7M) and September 4 (\$41.9M). Blue Origin CLPS: 80JSC026F7013 and 80JSC026F7015 under 80JSC020D0010, awarded May 26, 2026, Merritt Island place of performance, obligations of \$6.58M each on August 6, 2026. Northrop SPRPA119FE31N transaction of June 16, 2026 is an administrative modification (DCMA name change) and is excluded. The connection from award to local job postings is a reasonable interpretation, not something this issue measures directly.

⁴ **What the Market Pays.** County series: BLS QCEW, Brevard County, FL (area 12009), private ownership, Q1 2026 vs Q1 2025; NAICS 3364 employment 10,341 (March 2026) vs 9,154 (March 2025), average weekly wage \$2,948 vs \$2,788; NAICS 336414 employment 8,297 vs 7,210, wage \$3,003 vs \$2,902; NAICS 334511 employment 6,545, wage \$3,121; NAICS 541330 employment 6,536, wage \$2,455; all industries employment 216,296, wage \$1,522; establishments in 3364: 43 (Q1 2026) vs 42. Florida NAICS 3364 employment 36,399 (March 2026); U.S. NAICS 3364 average weekly wage \$3,043 (Q1 2026). Annualized figure is 52 × weekly. Occupational figures: BLS OEWS, May 2025, Palm Bay–Melbourne–Titusville and national, annual mean wages, like-for-like; the May 2026 estimates are expected in spring 2027.

⁵ **This Month on the Space Coast.** Roman Space Telescope: launched August 30, 2026 on Falcon Heavy from LC-39A, boosters recovered at LZ-40 (NASA/SpaceX coverage). Crew-13: NASA mission blog, August 29, 2026 (oxidizer leak found during Dragon processing; September 12 target withdrawn) and September 16, 2026 (valve replaced); launch NET October 1, 2026 from SLC-40. New Glenn: Blue Origin disclosure of August 6, 2026 (BE-4 main-oxygen-valve cause; return to flight targeted before end of 2026); no subsequent public update through September 22. Starliner-1: Boeing Q2 2026 filing (NET Q4 2026). Artemis III: NASA updates (crew at LC-39A September 3, 2026; mission now a crewed low-Earth-orbit docking demonstration, NET June 2027). Extant Aerospace: Space Coast EDC (July 2026 groundbreaking; 376,000 sq ft; \$75M+; about 200 jobs). Launch cadence: our tally from published launch logs, 52 through August 16 (prior issue) plus Starlink (August 21, August 25), Roman (August 30), O3b mPOWER (September 13) = 56 through September 22; 2025 total (109) per Space Launch Delta 45; pace comparison is our own proration. WARN: official FloridaCommerce list. Astrion, 820 Falcon Ave, Patrick AFB (16; notice August 28, 2026; layoff date September 30, 2026) and Eglin AFB (204; same dates); Health First, Rockledge (215; September 16, 2026); Illumus, Titusville (84; notice February 2026; through September 30, 2026).

⁶ **Monthly Spotlight.** Lockheed Martin KSC postings enumerated from the company's official careers platform on September 22, 2026 (25 KSC-primary requisitions; titles reviewed individually; shift tags counted from titles). COMET modification titles per footnote 3. KSC facilities awards per footnote 3; awardees are construction contractors outside the Index sample by design. Artemis III status per footnote 5. The interpretation of the modification sequence ("kept the incumbent, cut the scope") is ours. NASA has not published a narrative explanation.

⁷ **National Context.** Sources: [Aerospace Industries Association, 2026 Facts and Figures](#) (2025 data; released July 2026); U.S. DoD FY2026 appropriations (P.L. 119-75); BLS OEWS May 2025 (national and local); [BLS Current Employment Statistics series CES3133640001](#) (all employees, aerospace product and parts manufacturing, seasonally adjusted), monthly series July 2025 to July 2026 extracted September 22, 2026; July 2026 preliminary (594,500); June 2026 revised to 591,400; July 2025 568,500. "Decade-plus high" refers to the highest value in the 2016 to 2026 series data extracted. National QCEW NAICS 3364 wage per footnote 4. National and local wage figures are like-for-like averages.

September count sheet (compact)

September employer count sheet, per-company method and confidence.

Employer	Sep	Aug	Method (September)	Confidence
Blue Origin	712	636	Official board (Workday), Space Coast location facet, all requisitions enumerated	High
Northrop Grumman	415	~422	Official site, browser-read (Melbourne default view; city facet 353; Cape/Merritt Is. 8)	High (±3)
L3Harris	344	318	Official site, 25-mile radius of Melbourne, all pages enumerated with site categories	High
SpaceX	106	~75	Official hiring-system board, Cape Canaveral filter, complete list (method v3)	High (new baseline)

Employer	Sep	Aug	Method (September)	Confidence
Lockheed Martin	73†	16	New official platform, all Brevard-linked requisitions enumerated (56 primary + 17 multi-site)	High; re-baselined
Leonardo DRS	46	31	Official site search, Melbourne-listed only (14 internships)	High
Collins Aerospace	42	26	Official hiring-system location-facet query, five Melbourne buildings (method change)	High (new baseline)
Embraer	30	31	Official careers board, Melbourne-tagged + verified multi-site	High
Amentum	~23	~35	Company's own syndicated feed + Indeed (official site offline)	Medium-high
Amazon Leo	21	20	Official API, "kuiper" + "Leo" queries deduped	High
Boeing	16	7	Official site, 50-mile radius (3 Brevard-primary)	High
Extant Aerospace	8	n/a	Indeed (no official board); added this quarter	Medium-high
Custom Aerospace	2	3	Indeed (no official board)	High
KBR	2	1	Official site, Florida facet (Melbourne, Australia excluded)	High
Leidos	2	3	Official board, Florida search, Brevard-tagged	High
Beyond Gravity	1	2	Official board, full list scanned	High
Jacobs	1	3	Indeed (official site unreadable)	Medium-high
Sierra Space, Redwire, Bechtel, Space Coast Composite Processing	0	0	Official boards enumerated + Indeed zero-check	High

†Re-baselined after August's platform migration. "~" marks counts carrying a stated uncertainty band. Full pull notes retained; available on request.

The tracked company universe (21)

Anchor: Blue Origin, Northrop Grumman, L3Harris, Lockheed Martin, SpaceX, Leonardo DRS, Embraer, Collins Aerospace (RTX), Amazon Leo (formerly Project Kuiper), Boeing. **Suppliers/specialists:** Redwire, Sierra Space, Custom Aerospace, Space Coast Composite Processing, Beyond Gravity, Extant Aerospace.

Base/range contractors: Amentum, Jacobs, KBR, Leidos, Bechtel. (*Quarterly review, September 2026: removed Space Perspective, Rocket Lab, Terran Orbital; added Extant Aerospace. Watch list, not counted: All Points, Relativity Space. Next review: December issue.*)

Intrepidus Talent Solutions • intrepidus-ts.com • specialist aerospace and defense staffing for Florida's Space Coast