

Press-Telegram

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★ 25¢

L.B. out as MD-12X site

6 cities make Douglas 'cut'

By Don Currie
Staff writer

LONG BEACH — Douglas Aircraft Co. confirmed city officials' worst fears Monday when it formally scratched Long Beach off the list of possible places to produce the MD-12X jetliner.

Although the chance of finding room to build the proposed jumbo jet near Long Beach Airport seemed remote, city officials had suggested closing a runway and taking over some land at adjacent Long Beach City College.

It wasn't enough.

Douglas officials confirmed

Monday that six cities are in the running for the MD-12X, which would be 35 feet longer and 40 feet wider than the company's current MD-11, being built in Long Beach.

The cities are Salt Lake City; Kansas City, Mo.; Shreveport, La.; Tulsa, Okla.; Mesa, Ariz.; and Houston.

Four of the cities — Salt Lake City, Kansas City, Shreveport and Tulsa — have made the final cut, Douglas spokesman John Thom said. Mesa and Houston have made preliminary proposals that Douglas is still considering.

The only states apparently crossed off the company's earlier list were California and Kansas.

Thom said the company wants to make a decision by the end of August and hopes to begin build-

ing the planes by 1993.

Final assembly of the MD-12X would mean at least 5,000 jobs. Industry estimates are that Douglas could build 30 of the jets annually for 20 years.

The MD-12X is seen as a direct competitor for Boeing Corp.'s 747 and would carry about 375 passengers up to 7,800 miles non-stop.

Although Douglas says building the MD-12X out of state won't mean relocating many Long Beach workers, other industry, state and union officials said it represented a lost opportunity.

"Any time they move work out of the area, it worries me," said Richard Rios, head of Local 148 of the United Auto Workers

PLEASE SEE MD-12X/A4



Douglas Aircraft Co.'s MD-12X: an artist's conception.

Profile of a jumbo jet: The proposed MD-12X

■ **Capacity:** 375 passengers in 3-class configuration.

■ **Range:** 9,200 miles.

■ **Length:** 236 feet.

■ **Wingspan:** 212.5 feet.

■ **Engines:** Three.

■ **Construction:** Final assembly of the jet would mean at least 5,000 jobs. Douglas has said it needs 600 acres for the project.

■ **Outlook:** Industry estimates are that Douglas could build 30 of the jets annually for 20 years.

MD-12X: L.B. ruled out for new Douglas jetliner job

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union, which represents about 20,000 Douglas employees at the Long Beach plant. "There's not a very good chance that it will ever come back."

Job exodus

"This is precisely the type of thing we're trying to prevent,"

said Ron Cedillos, who owns an aerospace testing company in Long Beach. Cedillos has been a leader in getting Gov. Pete Wilson to try to keep aerospace employment from leaving California. About 18,000 aerospace jobs are estimated to have been moved out of state in recent years.

"This will serve as an example

of what will happen and will continue to happen until we solve the problems of this industry," Cedillos said.

Only last Tuesday, heads of several of the biggest aerospace companies — including Douglas President Robert Hood — met with Wilson to air their troubles in doing business in the state.

High labor costs, expensive

land and burdensome regulations were among the issues discussed, Cedillos said.

Out of room

Land seemed the most pressing problem for Douglas in Long Beach, where 35,000 workers put together MD-80 twin-jets, MD-11 tri-jets and the Air Force C-17 cargo jet.

"We've just run out of room," Thom said.

Douglas has said it wants 600 acres for the MD-12X. This would be in addition to the company's 415-acre Long Beach property.

State officials said they had suggested that Douglas use Norton Air Force Base near San Bernardino or George Air Force

Base near Riverside as a site for the MD-12X. A congressional committee has recommended both bases be closed.

Long Beach City Manager James Hankla said he wasn't surprised by Douglas' decision.

"I think we're pleased they have no plans to move the current production out of state," Hankla said.