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GE Aviation's \$60 million utility plant will look like a jet engine

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GE Aviation is working on a \$60 million to \$70 million utility plant at its Evendale headquarters that bears a striking resemblance to its jet engines.

The new power plant will provide heating and cooling for the entire 7 million-square-foot Evendale campus along with pressurized air for shop services, a reverse osmosis system to purify water and new gas service. The 68,000-square-foot north utility plant was designed to look like a jet engine facing the sky.

Tim Meyers, plant manager for GE Aviation, said power plant buildings are typically disguised but GE Aviation wanted this building to highlight the facility's history as an aviation plant.

The glass-enclosed rotunda will highlight some of the high-tech equipment in the power plant and it's shaped like a jet engine complete with a front fan nose cone on the roof, which is a replica from a CFM56-7 engine, one the world's best-selling aircraft engines. That engine is produced by CFM International, a 50/50 joint venture of GE and Safran Aircraft Engines of France, and is assembled at the Evendale operation. On the side of the building there are three sets of fans.

"It really shows this is an aviation plant," Meyers told me.

Phase 1 of the plant, the mechanical electrical phase, will be complete this summer. Then, the boilers will start providing heat this fall. The next phases will add offices and a control room to the building.

KZF Design is providing the architectural, interior design and engineering services. Monarch Construction Co. is the general contractor for the project.

Randy Schultz, director of the commercial and industrial group at KZF Design, said all of the windows show off what's going on inside.

"They wanted to embrace what this building is doing," Schultz told me.

The new plant is part of the \$500 million investment GE Aviation is making in its Evendale headquarters by the end of the decade.

The chillers in the north utility plant will provide enough air conditioning for 4,000 homes, while the boilers could generate heat for 1,200 homes based on a 2,000-square-foot house. The plant also will house new steam boilers for engine and component testing. The new boilers will replace two existing steam plants on the facility that date back to the 1940s. The existing utility plant will be decommissioned in future years.

GE Aviation expects a 40 percent reduction in its carbon footprint when the systems are fully phased in over the next few years. The new plant also will reduce costs for GE Aviation as the new equipment is much more efficient.

The new plant will allow GE Aviation to control its heating and cooling operations in a completely different way. Meyers said the new equipment will "talk" to other equipment, making sure the buildings are heated and cooled much more efficiently.

Adding the reverse osmosis water will take the plant's water to a new purity level, Meyers said. This will help with maintaining equipment and pipes. The system is produced by GE Water, providing high purity water for testing and the steam boilers. It will serve as a GE Water showcase site for this new technology.



COURTESY GE AVIATION

The north utility plant on GE Aviation's Evendale campus was designed to look like a jet engine facing the sky.

The actual building is complete, but Meyers said there is still a lot of work to be done. GE Aviation is putting in the mechanical equipment, pipes, chillers and boilers, which will be done over a two-year period. Meyers expects the plant to be fully operational by 2019.

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