

Chromalloy Triples Component Casting

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Chromalloy formally opened its new casting facility in Tampa Dec. 2, which gives it three times as much capacity to make single-crystal and directionally solidified components, and twice as much capacity for Equiax components, as its original one here. Chromalloy invested \$30 million in this facility, which is designed around the Lean process to cut lead times for hot-section engine parts from 12-16 weeks to one to four weeks, according to Tom Trotter, VP and general manager of Chromalloy Castings.

Coupled with process efficiencies and state-of-the-art quality controls, Chromalloy says it can produce a higher volume of hot-section parts at a higher quality than it could do at its original facility in Tampa, which it left Oct. 15.

Chromalloy, one of the largest independent suppliers of FAA-approved engine replacement parts, repairs and coatings, says the new 150,000-sq.-ft. castings facility, about a 15-minute drive from the old one, can pour 1 million lbs. of nickel- and cobalt-based super alloys annually, compared with about 300,000 lbs. of material at the previous one. Now that the casting facility is fully operational, Chromalloy decided to invest another \$5 million to add another 40,000 sq. ft. to enable on-site development of ceramic cores, which are used in investment casting to form the cooling passages within components.

Chromalloy's Carson City, Nev., facility makes some cores, but the company primarily relies on outside companies to provide them, so Trotter says the inhouse capability "will shave time off development," help speed time to market and further improve quality controls. He expects the building addition and capability to be fully operational in January 2012. "This will be the only casting facility in the world with on-site core development capable for casting the entire range of aero and industrial gas turbine components," he says.

Photo credit: Chromalloy