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### Right parts, right time

- [Brendan Kearney](#)
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Photo by Brad Nettles / Sylvester Hester, president and chief executive officer of Key Logistics Solutions, said the company's new, 50,000-square-foot facility in Hanahan provides warehouse and distribution services for the local Boeing 787 Dreamliner assembly plant.

Key Logistics Solutions, which manages Boeing South Carolina's "non-fly-away" parts, cut the blue ribbon on its Hanahan facility Monday. But the collaboration dates back to before Boeing's final assembly building even had its full framework, much less the three Dreamliners-in-progress it has inside today.

Sylvester Hester, president and chief executive officer of Key Logistics Solutions, said it all began when he ran into a couple of Boeing executives at a Carolinas Minority Supplier Development Council CEO breakfast in 2010 and gave them his "elevator speech."

## Previous coverage

[Boeing gets new supplier: Key Logistics will deliver tools, other materials to 787 factory](#), published 1/27/12

When the final assembly building opened with its own, more elaborate ribbon-cutting last June, Key Logistics executives were in town from Duluth, Ga. They inked their multiyear contract with Boeing during that visit, said Karl Grant, executive vice president with Key Logistics.

"That was a good trip," Grant said Monday.

Key Logistics first set up shop on Boeing's campus by Charleston International Airport, and by the end of summer, the company began the move into its larger, 50,000-square-foot space in Hanahan. The company received its certificate of occupancy in November within the warehouse otherwise occupied by another Boeing vendor, New Breed Logistics, which is a "fly-away" parts handler.

Grant said the company has been receiving, processing and delivering everything from wrenches to light bulbs ever since.

Marco Cavazzoni, Boeing South Carolina vice president and general manager of final assembly and delivery, explained the relationship between the jet manufacturer and its parts handler in terms of that between a surgeon and a team of reliable and responsive aides.

"We build the airplanes. We are the surgeons," Cavazzoni said. "And what we need is an infrastructure that allows us to have what they require on a just-in-time basis, all the time, flawlessly."

"And that's what you provide," he told Hester, Grant and the members of their 26-member team that gathered for Monday's festivities.

Cavazzoni said Boeing will be "pretty demanding" but praised Key Logistics for a "great start" and said twice that he looks forward to working together for "decades to come."

Hester, a Michigan native who began his career in the auto industry before building a multisector logistics business, liked the sound of that future.

"'Decades' is a good word," he said a few minutes later.

New Breed's 400,000-square-foot warehouse is about a 20-minute drive from Boeing's campus. Key Logistics occupies the back corner and handles the parts that help make Dreamliners or keep the local Boeing factories running. Photos of the plane hang on the walls.

What happens to each part that comes in depends on how urgently it's needed. Some are trucked right over to Boeing, whereas others -- like replacement bulbs or fuses for the factory buildings -- are stacked on tall storage racks until they're needed.

In one area, workers etch serial numbers onto tools or implant them with computer chips so they won't get lost. Then, when they're needed by Boeing's assemblers and fabricators, the logisticians deposit them into boxes, which either go directly to Boeing or through an inside gate to New Breed, which pairs the tools with the plane parts they'll be used to install.

Another area is a climate-controlled room for hazardous materials.

As a veteran logistics specialist just back from a tour in Afghanistan, Omar Lewis, the new second-shift supervisor, knows all about the necessity of delivering the right parts at the right time. A hiccup could slow the production of the very expensive, very important final product.

"We gotta get it over ASAP," said Lewis, 31. "That's how we do it."

Reach **Brendan Kearney** at 937-5906.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *Earlier versions of this story incorrectly spelled Marco Cavazzoni's name. The Post and Courier regrets the error.*