

C-130J Super Hercules Named 'Coolest Thing Made In Mississippi'

One aircraft, two awards, two states, back-to-back years.

Jackson, Mississippi, Sept. 9, 2026 -- The Mississippi Business Alliance announced Lockheed Martin's C-130J Super Hercules as the winner of the 2026 Mississippi Makers' Challenge, a competition that determines the "Coolest Thing Made in Mississippi."

"Mississippi is proud to see Lockheed Martin's Meridian-built C-130J Super Hercules named MSBA's Coolest Thing Made in Mississippi," said Governor Tate Reeves. "This vital aircraft supports more than 500 Mississippi jobs across our state, building on a 57-year heritage in Meridian. We are proud of the key role Lockheed Martin continues to play in Mississippi's support of the U.S. Armed Forces and our allies."

The announcement was made Wednesday at an event at the Jackson Convention Complex.

"Congratulations to Lockheed Martin on being named the winner of the 'Coolest Thing Made in Mississippi.' This recognition reflects the innovation, advanced manufacturing expertise and skilled workforce that make Mississippi a leader on the global stage," said John McKay, Mississippi Business Alliance president and CEO. "We are proud to celebrate Lockheed Martin's team and the remarkable work they accomplish right here in our state."

The same spirit of pride echoes within Lockheed Martin.

"Built to Deliver. Built to Last. That's a perfect description of the C-130J, our Mississippi workforce, and the community behind it. Being named the 'Coolest Thing Made in Mississippi' is tremendous recognition and testament to the skill, pride, and dedication of the workforce who builds the C-130J and the community that supports it," said Trish Pagan, vice president of Air Mobility and Maritime Missions and Marietta site general manager. "Our team commitment to quality and innovation touches every C-130J component and aircraft we build. We're extremely proud of our team in Meridian, and all our employees who have a role in building and delivering this iconic aircraft for the world."

The C-130J Super Hercules is a proven aircraft, trusted worldwide to deliver results across 20 missions, in all types of operational environments. From medical evacuation and aerial refueling to firefighting, humanitarian relief, and combat operations, it offers versatility, adaptability, and dependability for 27 nations.

Established in 1969, Lockheed Martin in Meridian is a key feeder site for the C-130J production line. The plant fabricates roughly half of the aircraft's fuselage and contributes 12% of the overall airframe. Among its most critical products is the cargo floor assembly, a part that must meet the highest standards of durability and performance to support the Super Hercules' demanding missions.

"Our team's dedication to precision and quality is what makes the Super Hercules a true

Mississippi made marvel," said Rashad Corpening, director and site lead, Lockheed Martin's Meridian site. "I'm very proud of the team and what this recognition represents."

The Mississippi Makers' Challenge is an annual contest hosted by the Mississippi Business Alliance. Lockheed Martin in Meridian faced competition from a total of 32 companies, including the other finalists — Toyota, Cathead Distillery, and CITE Armored, Inc.

"It's the coolest thing in Mississippi because someone's life depends on it. This is not your usual production assembly line. This is precision maintenance and production," said Dale Turnbull, C130J Multi-Functional production senior manager in Meridian. "We take pride in making this incredible aircraft for the global community."

This makes two consecutive "Coolest Thing Made" championships for the C-130J Super Hercules after winning the "Coolest Thing Made in Georgia" for 2025. Production and final assembly for the C-130J occurs at Lockheed Martin's manufacturing plant in Georgia.

Lockheed Martin received a winner's banner, a trophy, and the coveted championship belt at the ceremony.

For additional information, visit our website:

<https://www.lockheedmartin.com/en-us/products/c130.html>

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