



**Embargoed until: April 24, 2025 4:00 p.m.**

## **Blueflite chooses to locate in Lafayette, La., advancing medical logistics in the state**

**Lafayette, LA** – The Lafayette Economic Development Authority (LEDA) is proud to announce that drone logistics leader **Blueflite** has chosen to expand into Lafayette—further solidifying Lafayette's growing reputation as a hub for technology and healthcare innovation. The company's decision is backed by a strategic, \$250,000 investment from Ochsner Louisiana Innovation Fund (OLIF), a \$10 million fund established by Ochsner Health, in partnership with Louisiana Economic Development (LED) via the State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI), to support early-stage health companies in Louisiana. The investment showcases how Lafayette's collaborative business environment helps innovative companies thrive.

Blueflite will develop revolutionary drone technology for medical logistics and emergency response. The company's choice of Lafayette demonstrates the community's unique ability to leverage multiple industry strengths—healthcare, aviation and aerospace, and technology. Further, healthcare innovation is a major driver of economic growth in the state and Blueflite's technology aligns with statewide and nationwide priorities for improving medical logistics. This latest announcement is part of a broader growth trajectory of Blueflite's, and local leaders foresee additional and increasingly stronger partnerships on the horizon as Blueflite scales from its base of support in Louisiana.

"We're excited about this investment, which positions Blueflite to transform medical logistics," said Frank Noppel, CEO of Blueflite. "Our drone technology delivers critical supplies like blood and medications with unmatched speed, precision, and reliability, improving healthcare delivery and saving lives."

As part of the expansion, Blueflite will open a new office at the Opportunity Machine (OM) in Downtown Lafayette, becoming part of the region's healthcare and technology ecosystem. By locating at the OM, Blueflite will be best positioned to take advantage of the full breadth of resources offered while leveraging LEDA's business development services and building connections with local tech and aerospace technology experts.

"Blueflite's advanced logistics technology will strengthen and contribute to the ongoing growth of our local innovation ecosystem," said Mandi Mitchell, LEDA's president and CEO. "We fully embrace pioneering technology companies in Lafayette, and we're especially excited about Blueflite as their business model crosses multiple of our target industry sectors—logistics, aviation and aerospace, technology, and healthcare."

"By integrating cutting-edge drone technology with critical healthcare logistics, Blueflite's decision to grow in Lafayette represents exactly the kind of innovation-driven economic development we strive to support across Louisiana," said Josh Fleig, LED Chief Innovation Officer. "This expansion shows that our whole-of-Louisiana strategy goes far beyond traditional projects and is driving innovation and accelerating impact statewide. We're proud to support this bold vision through the Ochsner Louisiana Innovation Fund and look forward to the transformative outcomes it will bring to local communities."

Following an initial meeting with Blueflite at an autonomous systems and robotics trade show, LEDA's business recruitment team reengaged with the company along with Ochsner Ventures, an investment and partnership group within Ochsner Health which recognized the potential of Blueflite's technology to drive healthcare innovation.



"At Ochsner, we seek out transformative solutions that improve healthcare accessibility, efficiency, and outcomes," said Aimee Quirk, Senior Vice President & Chief Corporate Development Officer, Ochsner Health; and CEO, Ochsner Ventures. "Our investment in Blueflite through the Ochsner Louisiana Innovation Fund not only promises to revolutionize medical logistics—delivering life-saving supplies faster and more efficiently—but also stimulates economic development and new jobs in Louisiana. We are proud to support Blueflite's expansion into Lafayette and the positive impact it will have on patient care and the economy."

Ochsner Lafayette General's Level II Trauma Center and network of rural hospitals will directly benefit from the innovation Blueflite is bringing to the region.

"Ensuring rapid access to critical medical supplies is vital for our trauma center and rural hospitals throughout our region," said Patrick Gandy, CEO of Ochsner Lafayette General. "This investment in drone technology strengthens our ability to deliver life-saving care when and where it's needed most—whether it's blood products for emergency surgery, medications for rural communities, expediting lab samples or essential supplies in disaster response situations. We are excited to see this technology take shape in Lafayette."

In 2023, Blueflite established a strategic partnership with Acadian Ambulance, in which Blueflite's subsidiary, Darkflite, secured a U.S. Department of Transportation Phase 1 SBIR contract for a pioneering drone-based blood delivery system to enhance prehospital care by providing rapid and efficient delivery of blood products and medical tools to crash victims and emergency responders. Acadian Ambulance, founded in Lafayette in 1971, is a leading provider of medical transportation. The company's diverse services span health, safety, security, education, and transportation.

"Acadian's collaboration with Blueflite signifies our commitment to embracing technological advancements and delivering exceptional value to our patients and healthcare partners. This innovation can significantly enhance prehospital care and emergency medical response, ultimately saving more lives," said Blaise Zuschlag, Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer of Acadian Ambulance.

With this investment from Ochsner Ventures, the ongoing partnership with Acadian, and business development and technical assistance support from LEDA and the OM, Blueflite is poised to advance the future of medical logistics, leveraging autonomous drone technology to improve patient outcomes and healthcare access across Louisiana.

The partnership between **Blueflite**, **LEDA**, **OM**, **Acadian** and **Ochsner Health** exemplifies how Lafayette continues to attract and support groundbreaking companies that are shaping the future of healthcare, technology, and aviation and aerospace.

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**About Blueflite:** Blueflite is an innovative drone logistics company developing next-generation autonomous delivery solutions. With a focus on medical logistics, emergency response, and commercial applications, Blueflite's advanced technology provides fast, reliable, and sustainable transport for time-sensitive goods.

**About LEDA and the OM:** The [Lafayette Economic Development Authority](https://www.leda.la.gov/) (LEDA) works with businesses as they make decisions to start, expand or relocate to Lafayette, Louisiana. Through strategic collaborations with business and industry, state and local government, and education partners, LEDA drives economic growth and diversification for Lafayette Parish. The [Opportunity Machine](https://www.opportunitymachine.la.gov/) provides support for early-stage technology, research-driven, and innovative startups. The OM's focus lies in nurturing tech and tech-enabled ventures through specialized business education, targeted mentorship, strategic networking opportunities, and a workspace environment designed to meet high-growth startups' dynamic needs.



**About Ochsner Health:** [Ochsner Health](https://www.ochsner.org/) is the leading nonprofit healthcare provider in the Gulf South, delivering expert care at its 46 hospitals and more than 370 health and urgent care centers. For 13 consecutive years, U.S. News & World Report has recognized Ochsner as the No. 1 hospital in Louisiana. Additionally, Ochsner Children's has been recognized as the No. 1 hospital for kids in Louisiana for four consecutive years. Ochsner inspires healthier lives and stronger communities through a combination of standard-setting expertise, quality and digital connectivity not found anywhere else in the region. In 2024, Ochsner Health cared for more than 1.6 million people from every state in the nation and 63 countries. Ochsner's workforce includes more than 40,000 dedicated team members and over 4,900 employed and affiliated physicians. To learn more about how Ochsner empowers people to get well and stay well, visit <https://www.ochsner.org/>.

**About Acadian Ambulance:** Acadian Ambulance is the largest employee-owned ambulance service in the nation, providing transportation and medical services to areas in Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi, and Tennessee. It is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services, and its sister division, Acadian Air Med, is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Systems.