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Aviation leaders lauded at Carnival luncheon Industry generates about \$13 billion annually, study says

By Jane Roberts

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Carnival Memphis is honoring leaders in the city's aviation industry today at its annual Business and Industry luncheon for doing everything from lobbying for airport infrastructure to positioning Memphis for a new Air National Guard base.

According to a University of Memphis study, one in every five jobs in the metro area is tied to the success of Memphis International Airport. Their pay and the economic impact of their work generate about \$13 billion a year in the local economy.

"When you look at the airport and how much it's grown, we have to wonder where Memphis would be without FedEx and Northwest," Carnival executive director Ed Galfsky said.

Jim McGehee, chairman of the Memphis-Shelby County Airport Authority from 1981 to 1997, helped set the airport's infrastructure in place, including laying the groundwork for the two-mile "world runway," completed in 2000.

He will receive the Cooke Halle Award, the Carnival's lifetime achievement honor for stellar contributions to industry and community.

Past Cooke Halle recipients include Frederick W. Smith, Billy Dunavant, Kemmons Wilson and Jack Belz.

Brig. Gen. Russell Cotney will receive the President's Award for work behind the scenes to get the \$200 million Tennessee Air National Guard base built here.

Construction will add \$85 million to the local economy this year. By 2006 the base's economic impact is expected to exceed \$104 million, including salaries for 100 additional aircraft mechanics.

Robert Wilson, president of Wilson Air Center, will receive the Chairman's Award for management excellence. The fixed-base operation often is called the "front door" to the city based on the number of passengers whose first impression of Memphis is Wilson Air.

For six years, readers of Aviation International News have named it the No. 1 FBO in the country.

The King's Award goes to John Moore, vice president of state and local affairs for NWA.

Corporate recognition will be given to Aircraft Safety Equipment, Floats and Fuel Cells, InterSky, Crew Training International, FedEx, The Hangar Inc. and The Memphis Group.

The luncheon begins at noon at Hilton Park Vista, 939 Ridge Lake Blvd. Tickets are \$40. Call 278-0243 by 10:30 a.m. for reservations.

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