

Wilson Air expanding FBO center

[Amos Maki](#)

[Wilson Air Center](#) is flying high.

With operations in two cities, two new hangars and a renovated office building planned at its Memphis headquarters, one of the country's best fixed-base operators is evaluating two new cities for expansion.

Wilson Air's Memphis operation, owned and operated by [Kemmons Wilson Cos.](#), is undergoing a \$4 million expansion. In approximately six months, the company plans to start construction on two hangars -- one 16,000 square feet and the other 25,000 square feet -- and take over an existing 13,000-square-foot office building on the southwest portion of its campus. The office building will support hangar operations with offices for flight crews and maintenance personal.

Once complete, the complex will be just under 20 acres with 43,000 square feet of office and aviation support and more than 121,000 square feet of heated hangar.

The company is also evaluating two facilities in other states, part of Wilson Air's mission to establish three to five FBO operations in high-profile cities across the country. Company officials decline to name the cities currently under consideration.

The company wants to keep the number of FBOs low so it can concentrate on its high standards of customer service.

"Once you get beyond three to five, everything just becomes numbers," says Wilson vice president David Ivey. "If you own 25 of these things, it's tough."

All this comes as corporate jets become more popular. In the next 10 years, manufacturers are expected to deliver more than 7,400 business jets, 35 percent more than delivered between 1995-2004.

The company has been recognized for its excellence by pilots, corporate travel departments and trade magazines.

For six years in a row, Wilson has been named the nation's best FBO by Aviation International News. AIN officials say the company's success is due to a mix of service, hospitality and smart management.

"In this business it's one thing to be popular," says Mark Phelps, senior editor at AIN. "It's another thing to be popular and make money at it."