The Kansas Airport System

There is a strong relationship between Kansas' economy and aviation. The state’s system of seven commercial service and 73 general aviation airports, listed in the National Plan of Integrated Airports System (NPIAS), provide the gateway to the nation’s air transportation system and the world’s economy. Airports support the Kansas economy by increased efficiency and productivity for all business activity, including the transportation of passengers for both recreational and business purposes. Airports are important economic catalysts, supporting thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in economic activity. Most of Kansas’ largest employers - both large and small - rely on the state’s aviation system to transport employees, customers, supplies, and products. Kansas' 80 NPIAS airports serve as the base of operations for a variety of businesses, including airlines, air cargo companies, flight instructors, charters, concessionaries, government entities, and many others. Kansas tourism industry also depends on the state’s system of airports to accommodate thousands of visitors each year.

Study Process

The Kansas Department of Transportation, Division of Aviation, implemented this study through a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) grant, to quantify the economic impact and relationship between the state’s system of airports and the economy. The study follows an approved methodology that has successfully quantified the value of airports and airport systems throughout the United States.

The economic contribution of each NPIAS airport in Kansas was measured in terms of employment, payroll, and output. A comprehensive survey process was used to calculate the direct economic benefits related to on-airport businesses and government agencies, including the indirect benefits associated with visitor-related expenditures. Secondary, or induced, impacts from these airport activities were calculated using economic models specific to Kansas. For example, when an airport employee purchases goods and services, those dollars circulate through the local economy which results in additional economic activity in the region. The total economic impact is the sum of all direct, indirect, and multiplier impacts.

Statewide Impacts

Based on information gathered during the study, approximately 91,000 jobs are attributed to the aviation industry, including 42,000 from Aerospace Manufacturing. These employees receive more than $4.4 billion in total payroll, and generate more than $20.5 billion in total economic activity. In addition, the 80 NPIAS airports in Kansas provide a number of health, welfare, and safety benefits, including aerial agricultural spraying, medical transport and evacuation, emergency response, search and rescue, flight training, law enforcement, wildlife management, military training, search and rescue operations, and education.

Impact Measures

Employment measures the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs related to airport activity including on-airport construction. A part-time employee counts as half a full-time employee.

Payroll measures the total annual wages and benefits paid to all workers whose salaries are directly attributable to airport activity.

Economic Activity (Output) measures the value of goods and services related to airports in Kansas. The output from on-airport business activity is assumed to be the sum of annual gross sales and average annual capital expenditures.
Newton City/County Airport is located in central Kansas approximately 20 miles north of the Wichita metropolitan area. The airport is included in the FAA’s National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS), making it eligible to receive federal monies. Additionally, its role within the Kansas Aviation System Plan is identified as a Regional airport, which is intended to accommodate regional economic activities, connecting to state and national economies, and serve all types of general aviation aircraft. The Newton City/County Airport provides an “all weather” facility with two runways that will accommodate corporate/business jets, multi-engine aircraft, and single-engine aircraft. Its primary runway, Runway 17/35, is 7,003 feet long, while its secondary runway, Runway 08/26, is 3,501 feet long. The field has on-site weather reporting, and the airport’s primary runway is equipped with an ILS approach, both of which provide access to the airport during most weather conditions.

Numerous businesses operate at the airport. Avcon Industries, Midwest Aircraft, and Park Aircraft Technologies Corp provide aircraft maintenance services, while Hesston College provides flight instruction to student pilots. MidWest Life Team is headquartered at Newton City/County Airport and provides vital patient services to the community. In addition to being a base of operations for emergency medical flights, the company also has a training facility and a maintenance facility located at the airport.

The airport’s primary function is to accommodate corporate/business activity. Companies such as Hawker-Beechcraft, Wells Fargo, Avcon Industries, and Hesston College use the airport daily. Other daily flying activity consists of pipeline inspections, flight training, and emergency medical flights. Local and State law enforcement use the airport on a weekly basis as does the military. Other aviation activity at the airport consists of doctor transport, aerial advertising, aerial photography, and surveying.

Newton City/County Airport serves the community by offering airport tours to local school children and after school organizations. A local chapter of the Experimental Aircraft Association meets at the airport and provides airplane rides to children. The airport sponsors an annual EAA fly-in as well as an annual air show drawing spectators and pilots from surrounding communities. As the only airport in Kansas to have an airplane wash bay, the airport attracts transient pilots from surrounding areas to the community.

### Impact Types

**First Round Impacts** include both direct and indirect impacts. Direct impacts are those benefits associated with on-airport businesses and government tenants. Indirect impacts generally take place off-airport and are usually attributable to visitor spending.

**Second Round Impacts** consist of induced impacts, which are those benefits that result from the recirculation and re-spending of direct and indirect impacts within the economy. This re-circulation is commonly referred to as the “multiplier effect.”

**Total Impacts** are the combination of all first-round and second-round impacts.