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.

Kansas’ Total Annual Economic Benefits from Aviation

| Total Jobs  | 91,279 |
| Total Payroll | $4.4 Billion |
| Total Output  | $20.6 Billion |

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.
Wichita Mid-Continent Airport is located approximately five miles from the downtown business district. The airport is included in the FAA’s National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS), making it eligible to receive federal funds. Additionally, its role within the Kansas Aviation System Plan is identified as a Commercial airport which accommodates scheduled air carrier service as well as all general aviation aircraft.

Wichita Mid-Continent Airport has three runways, a pair of parallel runways and a crosswind runway. The primary runway, Runway 01L/19R, is 10,301 feet long, while its parallel is 7,301 feet long. The crosswind runway, Runway 14/32, is 6,301 feet long. Both parallel runways are equipped with ILS approaches to all runway ends. The airport enplanes more than 1.6 million passengers and accommodates approximately 118,000 annual operations. The airport is served by six commercial carriers who provide non-stop service to destinations throughout the US.

Wichita was one of the first cities to establish a commitment to the aviation industry during the 1920s, leading to the title “Air Capital of the United States.” The continuing success of Wichita aircraft manufacturing companies such as Cessna, Lear, and Beech, earned the city the title “Air Capital of the World.” Much of this activity takes place at Wichita Mid-Continent Airport, with Cessna Aircraft Company and Bombardier Aerospace assembling business jets on the airport. This aircraft manufacturing base is supported by numerous FlightSafety International schools located on the airport that provide flight crew and maintenance training. Hilton operates a hotel on the airport, serving travelers to Wichita, as well as the thousands of students that attend FlightSafety International classes held at the airport each year.

Two fixed based operators (FBOs) provide services to general aviation users of Wichita Mid-Continent Airport, Signature Flight Support and Yingling Aviation. Numerous major businesses use the Wichita Mid-Continental Airport. Both Cessna and Bombardier use the airport for flight testing of their new aircraft, as well as offering maintenance services to their customers. Koch Industries, one of the largest privately-owned businesses in the U.S. and headquartered in Wichita, makes regular use of the airport.