

Memphis Business Journal

Friday, May 15, 2009 | Modified: Monday, May 18, 2009

Mississippi airports receiving federal funding for improvements

Memphis Business Journal - by [Michael Sheffield](#)

The state of Mississippi has received more than \$1.8 million in funding for airport improvement projects across the state. The funding is being provided through the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

Airports receiving funding include Tunica Municipal Airport, which is receiving \$230,504 for the construction of an access road; Prentiss-Jefferson Davis County Airport, which is receiving \$77,057 to rehabilitate its runway; \$106,432 for construction of a hangar and extension of the taxiway at Paul Pittman Memorial Airport in Webster County; \$128,815 for installation of a perimeter fence and new airport beacon at Indianola Municipal Airport; and Hollandale Municipal Airport, which is receiving \$216,604 for the rehabilitation of its runway.

Construction on a \$19 million, 39,000-square-foot terminal at the **Tunica Airport** began late last summer with a target opening date of July 2010. That project is being overseen by Memphis and Tunica-based **Allen & Hoshall**.

Tunica Airport averages 18 flights a week and serviced more than 57,000 passengers in 2008.

Delta Express opens secure parking facility in West Memphis

Delta Express, Inc., a West Memphis-based trucking company, has opened a 41-acre secure parking facility in West Memphis. Delta Express has partnered with Santa Monica, Calif.-based **Terminal Exchange Services**, which will manage the new facility.

Parking will be available at the facility 24 hours a day, and Mike Pilgreen, terminal manager for Delta Express, says it will provide a higher level of security.

“Our facility’s infrastructure is already designed, managed and operated for the protection of our client’s equipment and cargo,” Pilgreen said in a statement. “It just takes one stolen trailer with a million-dollar cargo to ruin a trucking company’s year. That will never happen here.”

Jon Paul Harwood, president of TXS, says cargo theft was growing before the economic downturn. Today, he says, securing cargo is even more important.

“This isn’t just another drop yard,” Harwood said in a statement. “By utilizing the secure facilities of the TXS Secure Trailer Parking Network, trucking companies will see their insurance premiums go down. In addition, they will experience zero losses from theft and better public relations. These improvements can’t help but ensure a rapid growth in this industry.”

Security features for the new facility will include video surveillance; around-the-clock access; log-in and log-out gate records; inventory control; dispatch-to-drivers controlled releases; document handling; trailer and tractor maintenance; and driver amenities.

Lou Hazel, CEO of Delta Express, says he anticipates enhanced parking depot security to become mandatory in the near future.

Ole Miss professor receives \$100,000 from Gates Foundation

The **University of Mississippi** has received a \$100,000 Grand Challenges Explorations grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which will support a global health research project conducted by Larry Walker, director of the National Center for Natural Products Research at the university.

The center specializes in using plants, marine life and other natural products to derive pharmaceutical products for health care use.

The project is one of 81 grants announced by the Gates Foundation in the second funding round of Grand Challenges Explorations, an initiative to help scientists explore ways to improve health in developing countries. The grants were provided to scientists in 17 countries on six continents. Grand Challenges has \$100 million in funding to distribute over the next five years.

Walker’s project focuses on experimenting with molecules that could kill malaria parasites. If the tests are successful, Walker can apply for another grant, which could lead to human studies of the drug’s effects.

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