Businesses and Industries

Introduction

Tennessee's transportation system plays a critical role in supporting economic growth across a wide range of industries. Airports provide connectivity to national and global markets. This connectivity helps businesses operate efficiently, reach new markets, and remain competitive. The following case studies highlight the relationship between aviation and key sectors of Tennessee's economy such as the defense and logistics industries. Together, these examples demonstrate how airports contribute to economic development, strengthen industry competitiveness, and support the efficient movement of people, products, and resources throughout the state.

Rockwood Municipal Airport (RKW)

Driving Investment to Fuel Local and Regional Growth

RKW is located in East Tennessee's growing industrial corridor, supporting advanced manufacturing, energy production, and technology-driven industries. This strategic location makes the airport an important asset for business connectivity, workforce mobility, and continued economic growth throughout the region. The airport generates approximately $15.9 million in economic output and supports 100 jobs, reinforcing its role in connecting businesses and supporting economic activity across the region. This City of Rockwood has become an emerging hub for industrial innovation and economic development in East Tennessee, positioning RKW to support the region's growth. One example of this economic growth is Flatrock Motorclub, a major economic driver for the area that is currently undergoing a $16 million expansion to accommodate increasing tourism, visitor activity, and business investment generated by the racetrack.

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Lovell Field (CHA)

Aviation Powering Corporate Success

Tennessee's automotive manufacturing industry depends on efficient transportation networks to support production, supply chain logistics, and access to national and international markets. CHA frequently handles executive and charter flights for Volkswagen leadership, providing critical access for corporate meetings, initiatives, and major events related to the company's Chattanooga manufacturing facility. By strengthening access to suppliers, customers, and global markets, Tennessee's airport system contributes to the continued growth and competitiveness of the State's automotive sector.

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McGhee Tyson Airport (TYS)

Investing in Growth, Enabling Innovation

Knoxville is one of Tennessee's fastest-growing areas, and TYS plays an important role in supporting the region's economic expansion. TYS provides connectivity for major employers, advanced manufacturing companies, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and the University of Tennessee, helping facilitate business travel, collaboration, and investment. The airport is also home to Cirrus Vision Center, the company's customer delivery and flight-training hub, which draws aircraft owners from across the country and reinforces the region's aviation and aerospace presence. The airport makes it easier for businesses, researchers, and universities to travel and work with partners, customers, and suppliers. This connectivity helps attract new businesses, support workforce recruitment, and strengthen the region's competitiveness in advanced manufacturing, research, and innovation.

TYS provides connectivity for major employers, advanced manufacturing companies, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and the University of Tennessee, helping facilitate business travel, collaboration, and investment.

Conclusion

Rockwood's growing industrial base and attractions such as Flatrock Motorclub demonstrate the important role aviation plays in supporting regional economic development, business connectivity, and tourism in East Tennessee. CHA enhances business connectivity by providing efficient access to corporate meetings, industry partnerships, and major events. TYS supports one of Tennessee's fastest-growing regions by serving major employers, advanced manufacturing industries, research institutions, and an expanding workforce. Together, these airports strengthen economic competitiveness, support industry growth, and enhance connectivity across Tennessee.