Tennessee's Role in the National and International Economy

Introduction

Transportation infrastructure plays a critical role in supporting Tennessee's economy by connecting businesses, workers, goods, and markets. Airports are an important part of this network, providing the connectivity needed for major employers, corporate operations, manufacturers, and logistics providers to compete in a global economy. From automotive manufacturing and corporate relocations to global logistics, these industries help drive employment, investment, and economic growth across Tennessee. The following case studies highlight Tennessee's role in the national and international economy.



Nashville International Airport (BNA)

Enhancing the Automotive Sector Though Aviation

Tennessee's automotive manufacturing industry produces more than 1 million vehicles annually and supports a network of over 900 automotive suppliers across the state including Nissan, Volkswagen, and General Motors, and BNA is at the forefront of that. These suppliers rely on the State's airports to connect executives, engineers, and suppliers with facilities across North America and around the world. BNA also provides access to time-sensitive air cargo services, allowing manufacturers to quickly ship and receive critical parts that support just-in-time production. Along with other transportation modes, aviation helps maintain efficient supply chains and supports an industry that exports approximately $16 billion in motor vehicles and parts each year.

Reliable aviation helps these manufacturers maintain supply chains, support business travel, and deliver vehicles to markets across the country and around the world.



Smyrna Airport (MQY)

Connecting Tennessee's Automotive Industry to the Rest of the World Through Aviation

MQY is one of the State's largest airports and provides a range of important aviation services, including national and international business support. The Airport provides convenient access for automotive industry executives, suppliers, and business partners, supporting corporate travel, business development, and global connectivity for Tennessee's manufacturing sector. Additionally, the airport's Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) and on-site U.S. Customs and Border Protection facility allow businesses to efficiently manage international shipments and travel without relying on larger gateway airports, supporting global operations directly from Smyrna.





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Robert Sibley Airport (SZY)

Supporting Global Food Supply Chains Through Aviation

SZY supports Tennessee's agricultural economy by providing aviation services that help farmers, agribusinesses, and related industries stay connected to regional, national, and global markets. In particular, the airport leases airport-owned land to local farmers for agricultural production, helping preserve productive farmland while supporting the region's agricultural economy and the movement of agricultural goods to markets across the country and around the world. Tennessee's agricultural exports exceed $2.6 billion annually, highlighting the industry's significant contribution to the State's economy.





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Conclusion

Tennessee's airports support key industries by connecting businesses, workers, and goods to national and international markets. Through their roles in automotive manufacturing, corporate aviation, and agriculture, airports help strengthen economic growth, global connectivity, and the state's long-term competitiveness. By supporting the movement of people, products, and business activity, the aviation system helps Tennessee remain connected to the global economy.



