



TAA Airport Awards Announcement

Each year the Tennessee Aeronautics Commission (TAC) and TDOT Aeronautics Division recognize excellence in airports and airport managers throughout the state with the issuance of select awards. The TAC and TDOT Aeronautics give these awards to commend recipients for their hard work, diligence, and devoted efforts in improving airports, airport safety, and aviation in Tennessee. The awards, in a small way, reflect the respect that the TAC and TDOT Aeronautics have for the many airports and airport managers within the state that have dedicated themselves to excellence in aviation and aviation safety.

Airport of the Year

This award recognizes the Airport that demonstrated the best level of achievement for airport operations, customer service, safety, and positive promotion of aviation for the previous calendar year in the state of Tennessee.

Eligibility: Must be a Public Use Airport licensed in Tennessee.

Winner: **Murfreesboro Municipal Airport**

Aside from the FAA Regional Safety award; they have recently completed a 4 bay MRO hangar with expanded apron area from an Aeronautics Economic Development grant, performed a crack repair on the whole airfield, seal coated almost all AOA areas and remarked the runway, displaced a threshold to achieve a regular State license. Reconstructed 3/5th of taxiway Alpha and are currently installing a new fuel farm (Jet A and AvGas, locally funded). Locally acquired some property in the RPZ and are working on others. Lastly, they were 1st in the State of TN to implement VirTower and successfully applied for the FAA's aircraft traffic control tower program. Generally speaking, a great bunch of proactive general aviation airport people that are truly an honor to work with.

Governing Body of the Year

This award recognizes the Airport Governing Body that contributed the most to the positive promotion of their Airport, Airport planning and/or airport improvements for the previous calendar year in the state of Tennessee.

Eligibility: Must be the recognized and established governing body, per T.C.A., of a Public Use Airport licensed in Tennessee.

Winner: **City of Rockwood**

The City of Rockwood has made great progress over the last five years. In 2019 the Mayor wanted to close the airport due to significant operating costs for the small community and higher priorities (i.e., schools, etc.). However, since that time the city has made steady progress on making the airport a value to the community and in 2023 become self-sufficient and able to provide local share for airport improvement projects without assistance from county or city funding. Key accomplishments include:

- Completing projects to maintain the airfield in state of good repair in line with TDOT priorities.
- Increased hangar rates and charges to fair market value to be more self-sufficient.

- Replaced a tenant using a hangar for storage with an aircraft maintenance shop
- An air ambulance company is now a tenant with 24/7 presence
- New utilities installed for users and tenants
- Constructed new taxiway for future development.
- Resolved aircraft parking issues

Airport Manager of the Year

This award recognizes the Airport Manager that contributed the most to the development, safety, customer service, airport promotion and/or airport operations for the previous calendar year in the state of Tennessee.

Eligibility: Must be the Manager (or like position) of a Public Use Airport licensed in Tennessee for at least the previous calendar year.

Winner: **Paul Turner - Maury County Regional Airport**

Paul has been at Maury County Regional (KMRC) for 15 years and has served as Airport Manager for the past 14 years. The safety record at KMRC over that time speaks to Paul's personal commitment to keeping the airport in top shape, and always making the right decisions regarding airfield operations in challenging conditions. During that time, Paul has led KMRC from requiring annual local subsidies to having yearly positive cash flows. Yearly fuel sales exceed 200,000 gallons with only 25 based aircraft. Paul achieves this result by being the preferred destination for cargo operations in support of the automotive industries operating south of Nashville. General Motors, Ford, Chrysler, and Nissan, and 26 other manufacturers who support them, are frequent users of KMRC's 6000' Runway. Increasingly, Automotive executives, retail executives, and world-famous performers routinely utilize KMRC. These individuals value the enhanced security which comes from how rigorously Paul and his team maintain their privacy regarding arrivals and departures. For everyone who lands at KMRC, they get the same outstanding service from Paul. He provides 24 hour fuel, catering, courtesy cars and always with the same smile and friendly conversation. A check of the 5-star reviews posted about Paul on Airnav tell you everything about how much passengers and crews appreciate Paul's efforts to make a stop at KMRC part of their future flight planning. The local leadership also recognizes Paul's efforts to connect with the neighboring communities. The City of Mt Pleasant declared a "Paul Turner Day" in recognition to his contributions. Paul hosts classroom visits, annual youth aviation events, and joint community events at the airport. The support Paul receives is best represented by the recent reopening of the airport. The county mayor, two city mayors and two state representatives all attended the ribbon cutting. Most recently, Paul led KMRC through the runway rehabilitation of 06/24. Working as part of team with TAD, the engineers and contractors, the runway was reopened on time, and even slightly below budget. Behind the scenes, Paul was in constant communication with the cargo operators, corporate flight departments, and his other customers. As a result, within the first months of re-opening, the airport's fuel sales exceeded previous record highs. The airport will be able to absorb the losses related to the closure without any local assistance. Paul's passion for the airport and his commitment to outstanding service have made KMRC an invaluable asset for the flying public. Just as importantly, our local communities recognize the airport as an important and valued asset.

Career Contributions to Aviation This award recognizes an individual whose contributions to Aviation in the State of Tennessee are significant and lasting.

Eligibility: Nominated and selected to receive award. Award may not be presented every year.

Winner: **Carey Wofford**

Carey Wofford is interwoven into Tennessee's aviation history over the last several decades. He is a former machinist at the Arnold Engineering Development Center having participated in numerous projects, both public and classified. Mr. Wofford is a private pilot and aircraft owner. He has logged hours on dozens of aircraft over the years. Most of all, Mr. Wofford has been a staunch advocate for Aviation in Franklin County (and Tennessee), having participated in millions of dollars of projects at the Winchester Municipal Airport and contract work for the Sewanee-Franklin County Airport. For roughly 25 years, Mr. Wofford has been the Chairman on the Winchester Municipal Airport Authority and participated on the Airport's advisory board prior to the Authority being established. He has overseen the hiring for the last four airport managers, been a staunch advocate and secured much needed support for the airport from the City of Winchester and Franklin County, and been able to secure millions of dollars for projects that include obstruction clearing, road relocation, runway and taxiway extensions, LED lighting, multiple property purchases which include relocations, and a terminal construction. It is not a far stretch to say that Carey Wofford is directly responsible for the success that is the Winchester Municipal Airport. It is very likely that without Mr. Wofford's efforts, companies like Hi-Tech, Baxter Enterprises, and Nissan North America would not have operations in Franklin County, Tennessee.