



**State of Illinois**  
Pat Quinn, Governor

**Illinois Department of Transportation**  
Ann Schneider, Secretary

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Illinois Airports Recognized by IDOT's Division of Aeronautics for Outstanding Service**

**Collinsville** – Illinois Transportation Secretary Ann L. Schneider today congratulated the “2014 Airport of the Year” award recipients. Seven awards were presented by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) at the Illinois Aviation Conference, held in Collinsville today, recognizing airports for their accomplishments throughout the year, outstanding partnership with the state and commitment to customer satisfaction.

“We are very proud of the commitment made to ensure the comfort and safety of Illinois travelers,” said Secretary Schneider. “These airports set the bar for excellence and we are happy to partner with them to continue to advance aviation and further safe and efficient air travel throughout Illinois.”

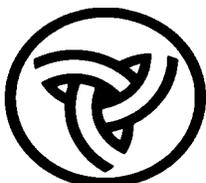
Each year, senior staff from IDOT's Division of Aeronautics convenes to determine which airports should receive special recognition as “Airport of the Year.” The criteria for the award are based on cooperation and coordination with the Division of Aeronautics by airport management and their staff, the facility's safety record, maintenance of the facility and the promotion of seminars and aviation events.

“These awards are our way of recognizing the tremendous dedication to the aviation community exhibited by airports and heliports throughout Illinois,” said Division of Aeronautics Director Susan R. Shea. “We send our sincere congratulations to all of this year's recipients.”

The division recognizes airports in the following seven categories:

- Primary Airports
  - Airports with annual enplanements of 10,000 or more passengers.
- Reliever Airports
  - Airports primarily designed to serve general and corporate aviation in large metropolitan areas, such as Chicago and St. Louis.
- General Aviation Airports – Category A
  - Airports that accommodate aircraft needing more than 5,000 feet of runway.
- General Aviation Airports – Category B

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- Airports important to the aviation system, serving aircraft requiring 5,000 or less feet of runway.
- Private – Open to the Public Airports
  - Airports that are privately owned and don't rely on federal or state funds to operate. These airports have to meet the same safety requirements as publicly owned airports.
- Heliports
  - All categories including: Public and Private Use Heliports, Hospital Heliports, and Restricted Landing Area Heliports.
- Restaurant of the Year
  - The Division's "Five Prop Award" for fine dining on the airport.

This year's awards recipients are as follows:

- General Wayne A. Downing Peoria International Airport (Peoria) – "Primary Airport of the Year"
 

Contact: Gene Olson, Director of Airports  
Metropolitan Airport Authority of Peoria  
General Wayne A. Downing – Peoria International Airport  
6100 W. Everett McKinley Dirksen Parkway  
Peoria, Ill. 61607-1220  
(309) 697-8272
- Lewis University Airport (Romeoville) – "Reliever of the Year"
 

Contact: A. Christopher Lawson, Director of Aviation  
Lewis University Airport  
Joliet Regional Port District  
#1 Executive Terminal Building  
George Michas Drive  
Romeoville, Ill. 60446-1806  
(815) 838-9497
- Vermilion Regional Airport (Danville) – "General Aviation – Category 'A' Airport of the Year"
 

Contact: Robert J. Gagnon, Airport Manager  
Vermilion Regional Airport – Clarence F. Carter Field  
22633 N. Bowman Ave., Suite 1  
Danville, Ill. 61834-7459  
(217) 442-4624
- Benton Municipal Airport (Benton) – "General Aviation – Category 'B' Airport of the Year"
 

Contact: Michael J. Wyant, Chairman  
Benton Municipal Airport Board  
Benton Municipal Airport  
1 Airport Road  
Benton, Ill. 62812  
(618) 435-3526



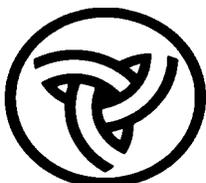
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- Galt Field (Greenwood) – “Private – Open to the Public Airport of the Year”  
 Contact: Claude Sunday, Owner  
 Galt Airport  
 5112 Greenwood Road  
 Wonder Lake, Ill. 60097  
 (815) 648-2433
- Blessing Hospital (Quincy) – “Heliport of the Year”  
 Contact: Bruce Hillebrenner, Director, Maintenance-Construction  
 Blessing Hospital Heliport  
 P.O. Box 7005  
 Quincy, Ill. 62305-7005  
 (217) 223-8400
- The High Flyers Grille (located at the St. Louis Regional Airport in East Alton) – “Five Prop -  
 On-Airport Restaurant of the Year”  
 Contact: Mr. Paul Ventimiglia  
 High Flyers Grille  
 St. Louis Regional Airport  
 16 Terminal Drive  
 East Alton, Ill. 62024  
 (618) 251-8500

The Illinois State Aviation System is one of the largest in the nation, comprised of more than 870 individual landing facilities. Illinois is home to everything from O’Hare International Airport, to municipal general aviation airports, to private grass strips in farmers’ backyards. IDOT’s Division of Aeronautics assists with the creation, improvement and continued operations of both private and public airports through financial assistance to public airports, inspection and technical oversight. The division also provides aviation safety and education programs to pilots, aircraft owners, mechanics and industry professionals. According to a 2012 Statewide Aviation Economic Impact Study, aviation contributes nearly \$41 billion annually to the Illinois economy.

For more information about IDOT’s Division of Aeronautics, please go to <http://www.dot.state.il.us/aero/index.html>

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