



Air Cargo Expert Hammers Aerotropolis Plan in Industry Publication

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By: *Patrick Ishmael*

And doesn't pull any punches in doing so. Published in *Air Cargo News* under the headline "[St. Louis Air Cargo—An Aerotropolis Too Far?](#)," airport consultant Michael Webber lays into the very fundamentals of the bill (emphasis added):

St. Louis area business leaders and airport operators propose to divert regional air cargo now dominated by Chicago O'Hare International Airport to what locals call the "Midwest China Hub" and "the Big Idea". Rather than test the likelihood of the hub's success, proponents and their enablers simply assume Lambert will attract the required service and then promise benefits based on that success. The proposition's champions and their consultants performed a meager analysis. Shockingly, the State of Missouri has already directed millions in public money on that basis and the Missouri Legislature almost approved hundreds of millions in additional support without any independent analysis.

Had an independent analysis been conducted, overwhelmingly critical concerns would have been exposed.

Mere context is damning enough. According to Airports Council International – North America, St. Louis ranked 39th among North American airports end of calendar year 2010. By comparison, Kansas City International Airport was ranked

45th and until 2009 had led St. Louis for a decade. In fact, St. Louis not only trailed Kansas City but also Des Moines. During a decade that found the U.S. air cargo industry in collapse, St. Louis' annual air cargo volume declined 20% comparing 2010 levels with calendar year 2000. St. Louis' air cargo slide is not atypical of the industry but nothing suggests it is in expansion mode.

Worse, an unprecedented surplus of on-airport air cargo capacity exists after a decade of nationwide contraction that witnessed the disappearance of such formerly common on-airport all-cargo names as Airborne Express and Emery Worldwide, as well as sharp contraction by BAX Global and DHL. Medium-sized U.S. airports are fortunate to still have both UPS and FedEx. The two integrated carriers account for at least 90% of air cargo at most U.S. airports, including St. Louis.

Lots, *lots* more at the link. Cross-state, Tony's Kansas City picks up the story under the headline ["MUST READ!!! GROUNDBREAKING EXPOSÉ UNCOVERS BIG MONEY ST L AIR CARGO FACILITY "FLEECING" AND A SECOND-CLASS KANSAS CITY CONNECTION!!!"](#) :

Just like most development schemes . . . The economic promises and utility of this project are suspect.

But even more importantly for this town, his reporting and analysis reveals. . .

WHILE IT MIGHT BE A BOONDOGGLE, KANSAS CITY WAS COMPLETELY OVERLOOKED IN THIS IMPENDING MISSOURI AIR-CARGO FACILITY HOT MESS!!!

[...]

Local politicians overlook this kind of **IMPORTANT INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM** at their own peril, and it's troubling that **\$400 million of taxpayer cash to support a competitor across the state** doesn't arouse any concern from either our local legislators or local business media.

More is coming. Stay tuned.

About the Author



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[2] <http://www.aircargonews.com/0611/FT110614.html>

[3] <http://www.tonyskansascity.com/2011/06/must-read-groundbreaking-expos-uncovers.html>

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