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News Release

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State Aeronautics Commission Honors Detroit Airport Official *--Avery key in releasing Federal funds to Michigan airports*

The Michigan Aeronautics Commission (MAC) has honored Detroit Metropolitan Airport's Susy Heintz Avery, Director of State Government Relations for the Wayne County Airport Authority for her diplomatic work with the Michigan legislature in forwarding along Federal funding to State airports.

Authorization to pass along the federal funds became caught up in a dispute in the legislature over funding for colleges and universities. State airports had applied for and won the federal funding, but the Michigan legislature needed to act to accept and forward the funds to airports.

"Last fiscal year, with construction season fast approaching, State airports were operating in the frustrating predicament of not knowing whether the Federal funding for our projects would be passed along by the Michigan legislature or not," said WCAA CEO Lester Robinson. "I am proud of the diplomacy and hard work of our airport's Susy Avery who was the key individual in releasing these aviation funds to airports across the State of Michigan."

"We can be proud of our elected officials in Michigan who graciously welcomed Susy into their offices during a very busy time at the Capitol," said Robinson. "They listened to her positive message and acted accordingly."

More than \$24 million was at risk for Detroit Metropolitan Airport projects—including reconstruction of a taxiway important to the timely opening of the new North Terminal. Nearly \$10 million hung in the balance for projects at Willow Run. State-wide \$167.5 million in capital projects was at risk. Many other officials from airports across the State joined with Ms. Avery in this effort.

"Susy Avery played a central role in working with the legislature and the Michigan Department of Transportation to pass this important funding legislation," said MAC Director Rob Abent. "The Michigan Aeronautics Commission recognized Ms. Avery's contribution to the advancement of aviation in this arena and chose to publicly acknowledge her with this prestigious award. She has our sincere thanks and appreciation."

The Michigan Aeronautics Commission, in 1990, began the practice of recognizing one individual and one organization whose contributions foster and enhance aviation in Michigan. Along with Avery, the Commission honored the Kalamazoo Air Zoo as winners of the 2008 MAC *Award of Excellence*.

Avery's walnut plaque reads, "In recognition of your enthusiastic advocacy on behalf of aviation in Michigan and your commitment to the enhancement of resources in partnership with the Michigan Aeronautics Commission."

For the current (2009) State fiscal year, the legislature assigned aeronautics to the MDOT budget as opposed to the Capital Outlay Budget to more smoothly channel Federal aviation funding to the airports. That budget has been signed by Governor Granholm, so State airports will have less of an issue accessing the federal dollars they have earned.

"I accept this award on behalf of all of my counterparts in Michigan's aviation community who worked very hard to convey a positive message to legislators," said Avery. "Capital improvements at airports create local business opportunities and jobs that cannot be outsourced."

NR Avery Honored 10-08

