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\$7 million cargo facility on tap at Memphis airport

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Memphis International Airport plans to move air cargo shippers currently located next to the main terminal to Cargo Central, the airport's future distribution park off Swinnea.

Construction on the first phase of the park will start next month. Memphis-Shelby County Airport Authority is currently preparing the site, located on Runway Road, for a \$6.9 million 36,000-square-foot warehouse. Completion of the warehouse is expected in May 2008.

Airport officials say the new facility at Cargo Central, once completed, will house air cargo companies currently located along Cargo Road, including **ABX Air**, Inc., Atlas Air, Inc., DHL, Integrated Airline Services, Inc., and Kalitta Air. The cargo arms of passenger airlines **Northwest Airlines Corp.**, **Delta Air Lines** and others will be allowed to stay in the existing cargo buildings, says MSCAA director of properties Richard White.

Fisher & Arnold, Inc., designed Cargo Central's first building and **Inman Construction Corp.** is general contractor. Both firms are based in Memphis.

The purpose is to provide a "modern, efficient facility with a lot of room to maneuver trucks" for the air cargo companies, says Bob Beesley, director of development for MSCAA. Trucks will have more room to park and cargo will be loaded onto aircraft in a more efficient manner, he adds.

This is the first in a series of three buildings the airport plans to build at Cargo Central. The planned cargo facilities are intended to "allow smaller cargo tenants to relocate to upgraded facilities, to increase their cargo handling capabilities and to attract new cargo business" to the airport, says Joe Polk, manager of construction administration for MSCAA.

Roger Sigler, Inman Construction Corp.'s director of business development, says the firm plans to bid on the next phase of Cargo Central as well. The first building is one of the largest projects Inman has done for the airport. It has a track record of more than \$13 million worth of terminal work at Memphis International Airport.

Working for the airport is much different than other construction projects due to high security and safety requirements, Sigler says. In addition to carefully screening construction employees, Inman needs to keep the site extremely clean.

"Debris must not get loose, so airplanes will not suck it up," he says.

As for the future of the buildings along Cargo Road, located just north of the main passenger terminal, some



COURTESY MEMPHIS-SHELBY COUNTY AIRPORT AUTHORITY

Aerial view of Memphis International Airport where several construction projects are ongoing or will start soon

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demolition can be expected. It would free up much-needed space "if and when we'll need that space," Beesley says.

When a new seven-story parking garage is built -- it is now being designed and initial cost estimates top \$80 million -- Cargo Road could be used for temporary parking.

"We would be displacing several hundred cars," Beesley says.

Construction projects have been abundant around the airport over the past couple of years. A new outbound road was completed last year; work on a new \$20.3 million inbound road is still ongoing and is expected to conclude in November, Polk says.

The projects will give way to a new air traffic control tower, estimated at about \$50 million, which will be completely funded by the **Federal Aviation Administration**.

The new roads also enhance vehicular traffic flow to and from the airport, Polk says. Next month, traffic will be rerouted again for the final stages of the inbound road, Beesley says.

Other construction projects at the airport include a deicing pad for the airfield, which will be operative this winter and is estimated at \$1.7 million, Polk says. Used deicing chemicals from aircraft will be collected in that area. The airport also recently started a \$4.7 million reconstruction project aimed at improving **FedEx Corp.**'s taxiway at the north side of the airfield, Beesley says. Its completion is anticipated this winter.

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