

DeSoto Industrial Air Park

Industrial plants will border the runway at a new Memphis airport built for business. Rail and highway transportation is close by

by BILL E. BURK • AOPA 161522

Memphis, with its many firsts, including cash-and-carry grocery stores, the Toddle Houses, and Elvis Presley, is now laying claim to another first—that of an airport designed strictly for the needs of industry.

Many airports have industrial areas within their boundaries. A few airports have been converted to industrial uses after general aviation failed to support them. But at DeSoto Industrial Air Park, located just five miles from Memphis' south limits, planners are developing a 100-

acre airport with a 4,000-foot paved, lighted runway bisecting two rows of industrial sites. Paving of the first 3,000 feet of runway began in April and the airport opens this June.

Justification for this remarkable undertaking is simple: If getting more things done per man-hour is a key to business profits, transportation is certainly one variable that can waste or conserve man-hours. That's where business flying comes in strong.

When DeSoto Industrial Air Park

is completed, the pilot will clear the runway onto a paved taxiway that will parallel the entire length of the runway. Resident industries will have the choice of building T-hangars adjacent to their plants or utilizing centralized T-hangars on the airport.

T-hangars will also be built on request for industries located near the air park.

Both 80 and 100 octane aviation gasoline will be available. The airport will operate mobile fueling service for 80 octane. Planes using the higher octane must be taxied to a gasoline pit near the north end of the runway. Mobile fueling service is planned for 100 octane at a future date.

Some company pilots may hold A&P licenses but those who wish an outside A&P will have the choice of the standby services of Estes Bryan, a licensed A&P, or flying their planes to Memphis Municipal Airport, five miles to the northeast.

About 25 acres are now ready as industrial sites. Over 150,000 cubic yards of dirt were moved in preparation and another 150,000 will be moved before the job is completed.

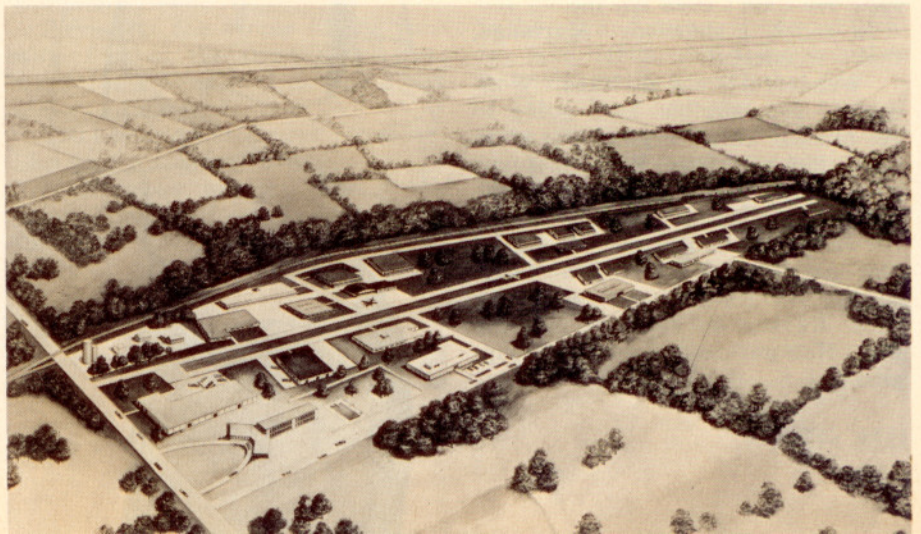
DeSoto Concrete Products Company has already located on the northeast corner of the airport and keeps a Cessna *Skylane* constantly in the air.

Charles S. Breazeale (AOPA 91134), one of the airport's developers, is one of the *Skylane's* pilots and an officer in the concrete firm. The plane is kept in a T-hangar next to

(Continued on page 78)

Since this aerial photo of DeSoto Industrial Park was taken 3,000 feet of runway (center) have been paved. Area will contain 100 acres for plant sites. Memphis suburb of Whitehaven is at upper right

Architects' drawing of the industrial area shows easy access to runway for adjacent business firms. Road at left runs along Tennessee-Mississippi state line; railroad borders far side of airport



DeSoto Air Park

(Continued from page 40)

the DeSoto Concrete plant.

DeSoto Industrial Air Park is located 100 yards south of the Tennessee state line in DeSoto County, Miss. It is bordered on the east by a mainline of the Illinois Central Railroad's Memphis-New Orleans route. DeSoto Concrete has a spur track and railroad officials say they will gladly add more spur tracks on request. A minute's drive to the east is U. S. Highway 51 connecting Memphis, Jackson, Miss., and New Orleans. Three minutes farther to the east, Interstate Highway 55, with four wide lanes connecting St. Louis with New Orleans by way of Memphis and Jackson, is now being paved and will open later this year, about the same time Memphis' perimeter expressway will be completed.

Industries on the airport will have Memphis addresses, Memphis telephone numbers, and will have the benefit of Memphis motor freight pickup rates. Immediately to the north of the airport lies quiet, residential, suburban Whitehaven, Tenn., with one of the highest ratios of pilots-to-citizens in the country. To the south, a "model city" is being developed which its planners (including Kemmons Wilson, a pilot, and Wallace Johnson, both of Holiday Inns of America fame) say will be self-sustaining and have a population of 35,000 in 10 years.

Helping Breazeale develop the airport are Robert B. Watson, Leon Manley, and Wilson Fly. Fly will act as real estate agent and is presently preparing a brochure on the air park which he will use as he "beats the bushes" for prospects. "We will either sell industrial sites or build and lease buildings on the airport," Fly said. "We don't mind doing either. Our object is to attract air-minded industries to the park and we will try to do whatever is necessary to obtain this goal."

Other pilots who will use the airport are Tennessee State Senator William Cobb, president of DeSoto Concrete, and W. L. Reed, roofing contractor and a director with DeSoto. Cobb uses the Skylane to fly to his large farm on the Tennessee river, 100 miles to the east, and to attend frequent meetings of the state legislature.

Reed attributes two sizable government contracts in Georgia to the fact that he is able to move about the country quickly and conveniently by private plane. Flying on commercial airlines could mean the loss of entire days for any of these men. Now, at most, they lose no more than one full day.

The airport property has been zoned industrial by the DeSoto County Planning Commission. Its chairman, A. W. Bouchillon of Hernando, Miss., is as enthusiastic about the new airport as its planners are. "Mississippi is presently engaged in a vast balance-agri-

culture-with-industry (BAWI) program to check the dwindling population in the rural areas. I am sure the airport will attract industries that will utilize our vast manpower pool and keep Mississippians in Mississippi."

Memphis, too, has a large pool of manpower resources within its half-million population.

Howell Watson of Dallas, Tex., president of the National Society of Industrial Realtors, said in a recent talk in Memphis: "With the gigantic growth of air freight, Memphis is in an enviable position for the distribution of goods that can move by air. Air freight industries, however, will want to pick an area near the airport. This is one of the reasons why the Trinity and Brooks Hollow industrial districts in Dallas have gone so well."

Watson noted that the Presidents Island and Ensley Bottoms industrial districts at Memphis are under government control. "Memphis needs a balance—more privately-owned and promoted industrial districts," he said.

"This is exactly what we are offering," Breazeale said. "We are conveniently located near all modes of transportation. (Memphis has one of the largest inland ports in the country on the Mississippi River.) Employees at our airport may buy beautiful homes within a mile of their jobs. Whitehaven offers several suitable homes for executives. The industrial climate at Memphis is good and the taxes low. I am sure DeSoto Industrial Air Park will be a terrific success."

It's a safe bet that should the air park prove as successful as its planners think, it could well set the precedent for future industrial airports across the country. END

THE AUTHOR

Bill E. Burk is aviation editor for The Memphis Press-Scimitar and an enthusiastic promoter of general aviation in the Memphis area.

Another Industrial Airport Gets Under Way

As paving of DeSoto Industrial Air Park's runways near Memphis began in April, ground was broken in a Maryland suburb of Washington, D. C., for another unique venture in airport planning. Montgomery County Airpark, just a half-hour away from downtown Washington, will be open to general aviation planes by July 1, the planners say.

Similar in design to DeSoto, Montgomery Airpark will utilize a central strip plan with industrial sites available on three sides—the fourth will be reserved for a nine-hole golf course and motel. By July 1, according to William E. Richardson, Bethesda, Md., industrial developer, 2,700 feet of a proposed 3,100-foot paved runway will be completed for lightplane use. Richardson, who conceived the Montgomery Airpark plan, has deeded 115 acres of the 380-

acre industrial site to the county for the public-use airport. The airport will be operated by Free State Aviation, Inc., headed by James E. Richardson (AOPA 176860) and Richard Kreuzburg (AOPA 164540).

No small part in the development of the airport was played by AOPA whose airport specialist, Cyril C. Thompson, has been working closely with aviation-minded county citizens since 1955 to show the county government how an airport could contribute to the welfare of the community.

Richardson said that 40 T-hangars and a temporary terminal building will be up by midsummer. The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce has mailed notices to several hundred industries announcing that the airport would be open to single-engine and light twin business aircraft. END

Ground-breaking ceremonies at Montgomery County Airpark, Md., in April brought together the four principals in the airport's development: (left to right) James E. Richardson, William E. Richardson, Richard Kreuzburg and AOPA Airport Specialist Cyril C. Thompson

