



STABY

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**ARRIVAL OF FIRST INTERNATIONAL CARGO SHIPMENT BRINGS HOPE FOR
NEW BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES AT MIDAMERICA AIRPORT**

MASCOUTAH, ILL., November 5, 2008 ...

Thursday, October 30th, marked the arrival of the first intercontinental flight of fresh flowers into MidAmerica Airport, in Belleville, IL, near St. Louis, MO. As expected, the flight was met with excitement and anticipation. The DC-10 cargo plane, with a holding capacity of 70 tons, touched down just after 7:00 a.m. local time carrying its first shipment of fresh flowers and other South American perishables. The flight was the first regularly scheduled flight of what will become weekly shipments from Bogotá, Colombia into MidAmerica Airport.

The cargo landing was a result of many contributing parties consisting of MidAmerica airport officials, the St. Clair County board, and a joint venture named Fresh Connections LLC. The joint venture is made up of management company Teqflor, Miami-based logistics firm Mission Cargo, and Baisch and Skinner Inc., a St. Louis-based wholesale floral distributor. All involved parties collaborated at length to make Thursday's historic flight a reality.

Once on the ground, the flowers were transferred into the airport's 50,000 square-foot warehouse and immediately placed into the new 163,000 cubic feet of refrigerated space. At that point, Fresh Connections worked to process the product, moving it through customs, and preparing it for distribution throughout the greater Midwest.

The designation of MidAmerica airport as a new intercontinental port of entry symbolizes an industry's desire to receive perishable product from South America in a quicker time frame. "Time to market and a completely managed cool chain environment are essential for any perishable product coming from South America. The Fresh Connections route through MidAmerica airport will better meet our needs and provide us with a fresher overall product." says Manuel Aragon of Teqflor.

Product received into MidAmerica Airport will decrease travel time off the same path taken through southern ports of entry by 36~48 hours. Flowers delivered through MidAmerica Airport will be given state-of-the-art temperature control and a sustained cold chain environment. Every

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box is vacuum cooled and all air pallets are wrapped in thermal blankets to ensure a constant, optimum temperature from start to finish.

A quicker route to market makes up only part of the mission behind Fresh Connections. Considering the lifespan of a typical flower is on average twelve days from point of harvest, Fresh Connections seeks to add additional value to the end-consumer. "If we can effectively maintain a proper cool chain environment – as they do in European markets – and decrease the time to market by two to three days, then the final customers should see a longer lasting flower. This truly is an industry-minded effort, not just a quicker, more direct route to receive product from South America." – John Baisch, Baisch and Skinner, Inc.

North bound flowers and other South American perishables are only one part of this arrangement. Once emptied at MidAmerica, the planes will be loaded with Midwestern-based products and flown to Miami where they will be combined with additional south-bound freight before being flown to Latin and South America. The arrangement will better serve the growing opportunities for Midwest exports and cut down on transportation costs to Miami, the point of departure for virtually all Latin and South American-bound cargo flights. The airport's geographic location is ideally-suited because of its close proximity to interstate infrastructure – preparing MidAmerica St. Louis Airport to become a Midwestern hub for international import and export transportation.

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