

LONGTIME TOURIST ATTRACTION ENDANGERED BY LOCKOUT

The Airline History Museum shuttered by Signature Aviation despite binding agreement with City

Kansas City – The Airline History Museum (formerly “Save-A-Connie”) has been locked out of its hangar facility at Charles B. Wheeler Downtown Airport since fall. Signature Aviation, the FBO (“Fixed Base Operator”) at the airport, believes it has control over the facility despite a 2005 master lease agreement with the City of Kansas City, MO guaranteeing the Museum use of Hangar 9 through 2035. A district court ruled against the Museum in a case filed last year. AHM believes the court ruled in error and is currently appealing. This case should come before The Missouri Court of Appeals later this spring. Signature Aviation is owned by Blackstone, Inc., an immense investment firm that owns FBO’s around the world.

“We fully expect to win this appeal,” says Airline History Museum President John Roper.

Ultimately, the City Council of KC has jurisdiction over Downtown Airport and the use of all land at that airport. AHM asks The City Council to honor their 2005 Master Lease agreement, and is asking people to write to their council representative and KC Mayor Quentin Lucas expressing their concern at possibly losing this iconic local treasure. More information is available at the group’s website, www.airlinehistory.org.

Kansas City was home of TWA and played a vital role in aviation history. The Lockheed Constellation airliner on display there, one of the last in the world, is in full TWA colors and captures a lost era in aviation. Many other historic aircraft are also housed there, including a classic plane formerly belonging to actor Harrison Ford. It had been undergoing restoration in conjunction with local STEM organizations. The world’s last Northrop Delta is there, as are a DC-3, which was delivered to Kansas City and TWA in 1941, a Martin 404 passenger airliner in TWA colors and a Lockheed L-1011, originally delivered to and owned by TWA in 1973. They are normally open to tour.

This unique collection of classic aircraft and aviation memorabilia have been left unattended in Hangar 9 since July of 2022. Padlocks are on the doors at the direction of Signature Aviation and the caretaking of this priceless collection is no longer possible due to this lockout.

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