



The Metropolitan Knoxville Airport Authority invites applications for  
**Chief Operating Officer**

McGhee Tyson Airport (TYS)  
Downtown Island Airport (DKX)  
Knoxville, TN

*EXECUTIVE SEARCH SERVICES PROVIDED BY ADK CONSULTING & EXECUTIVE SEARCH*



## Metropolitan Knoxville Airport Authority

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In 1937, the City of Knoxville opened a municipal airport to support the growing number of aviation enthusiasts in the region as well as to capitalize on the city's favorable location in the establishment of an air mail route. Being centrally located within one day's drive or a few hours flight from major cities, Knoxville made its position in the air transportation system critical. As the demand for air travel grew, the city transitioned airport operations to a newly-created, independent, nonprofit agency that would own and operate the city's aviation system. In 1978, the Metropolitan Knoxville Airport Authority (MCAA) was established. It is governed by a nine-member Board of Commissioners, who are appointed by the Mayor of Knoxville and confirmed by Knoxville City Council, and are charged with the financial success, future planning and development, and operation of both McGhee Tyson Airport (TYS) and Downtown Island Airport (DKX).

The MCAA directly employs over 185 staff members to operate TYS and DKX. There are approximately 3,500 additional employees with the various airlines and agencies, and an estimated 14,900 people are employed regionally because of TYS. Within MCAA's organizational structure, the **Chief Operating Officer** reports to the President and CEO to lead dynamic needs of airport activities and ensure organizational goals are met.



# The Airports

## McGhee Tyson Airport

Located 12 miles from the heart of Downtown Knoxville, 20 miles from a world-class technological research hub at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory and 30 miles from the majestic landscape of the Great Smoky Mountain National Park, McGhee Tyson Airport (TYS) is at the center of East Tennessee's growing region. 2023 was the all-time busiest year, reaching over 2.8 million passengers. This trend in passenger statistics can be attributed to strong relationships and operational leadership with air carriers: Allegiant Air, American Airlines, Avelo, Delta Air Lines, Frontier Airlines, and United Airlines Combined, these airlines operate more than 120 daily nonstop flights to 30 destinations, giving TYS passengers more nonstop options than most other peer airports. Moreover, the market for TYS is found in Knoxville's Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) of nearly 1 million people; however, airport research indicates that TYS attracts passengers from a much larger MSA of nearly 3 million people.

In addition to commercial air service, the airport's two parallel runways support significant general aviation, air cargo and military operations. At 9,000' and 10,000' in length, the TYS dual runway system annually handles over 83 million pounds of cargo; over 100,000 operations; and is home to world-class fixed-base operator, Signature Flight Support. TYS is also the host facility for the Tennessee Air National Guard's 134th Air Refueling Wing and their KC-135 Stratotankers as well as the Tennessee Army National Guard's Aviation Support Facility and their UH60 Blackhawk Helicopters.

TYS provides visitors with an on-site, full-service Hilton Hotel connected to the airline terminal that completed a significant renovation in 2016. And in 2020, the hotel opened an expanded conference meeting space, making it one of the largest meeting spaces available in the area.

Economically, TYS has an impact of \$2.1 billion annually and DKX has \$19 million annually in the local economies of its five surrounding counties through job creation, recruitment of new businesses, the attraction of new air service and the infusion of tourism dollars into each community. For example, based upon the recruitment package developed through relationships in the community and with state and federal organizations, the airport successfully recruited Cirrus Aircraft's Delivery and Training Center for all worldwide Cirrus Aircraft deliveries as well as their large Cirrus Factory Service Center. Joining Cirrus in the airport's 50-acre development park, known as the West Aviation Area, is a regional jet maintenance facility operated by Endeavor.





## The Airports (*continued*)

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With an annual operating budget of approximately \$33 million (Fiscal Year 2023), TYS is growing its facilities to meet the growing demand for air travel in its community. In 2021, the airport completed construction on the largest project in its 80-year history, the Airfield Modernization Program. This \$130 million, 6-year capital improvement project is a comprehensive airfield project that includes installation of a CAT I ILS and airfield lighting improvements on Runway 23L and a complete reconstruction and elevation change of RWY 5L/23R. It required complete demolition of existing airfield pavement, significant grade change and earthwork, concrete pavement, LED upgraded airfield electrical lighting system, LED airfield signage, CAT II ILS, Approach Lighting System, and markings. And in 2024, TYS will break ground on a \$180 million parking expansion.

### **Downtown Island Airport**

Downtown Island Airport (DKX) is Knoxville's most successful general aviation airport. Located adjacent to Downtown Knoxville and the University of Tennessee, DKX handles more than 73,000 operations per year on average and has over 170 aircraft based on the island. In 2023, DKX completed a new runway, lighting and signage project to better accommodate general aviation traffic. There are plans to update the DKX terminal building and entrance in 2024.



## The Community

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Founded in 1791, where the French Broad and Holston Rivers converge to form the Tennessee River, Knoxville has always been known for its great beauty, but this is a city where more than rivers converge. In this vibrant, progressive city, art meets adventure... and culture meets cuisine... and no one meets a stranger.

### Art Meets Adventure

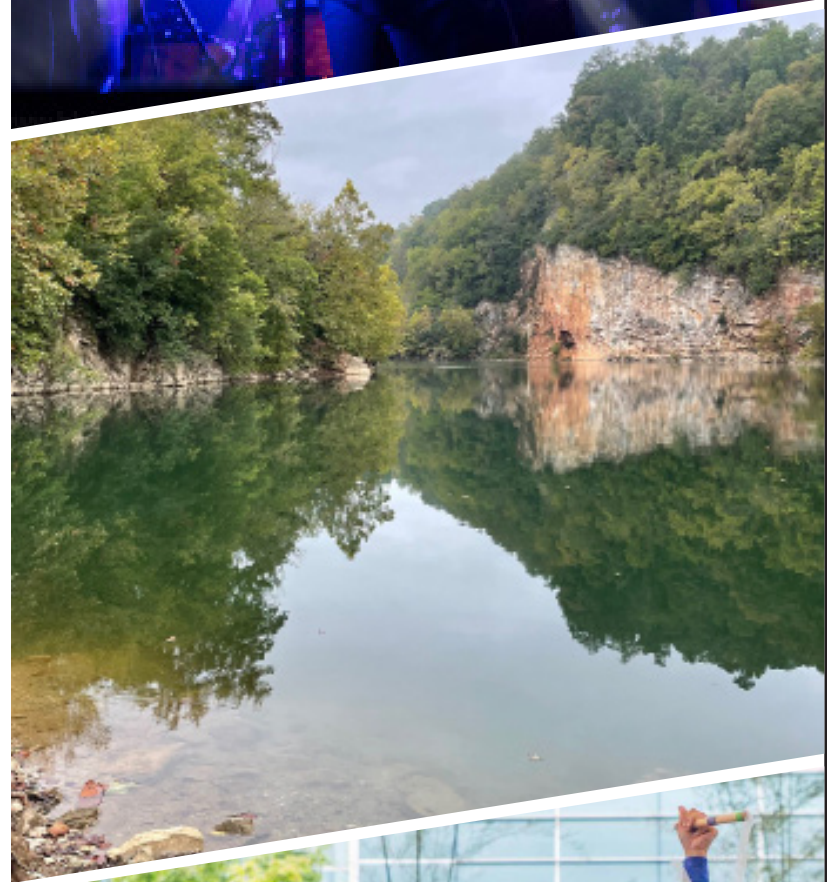
Knoxville is one of America's most vibrant cities for live music. From classical to bluegrass, country to rock, live music is on the Square, on the streets and on the stages of the historic Bijou and Tennessee Theatres, hosting concerts and Broadway shows as well as performances by the Knoxville Opera Company, the Knoxville Jazz Orchestra and the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra. Year round, this diverse and welcoming city hosts more than 70 cultural festivals and events. Highlights include the Dogwood Arts Festival, Rhythm N' Blooms Music Festival, Women in Jazz Jam, Knox Asian Fest, the Rossini Festival, Film Fest Knox, and the Big Ears Festival.

**The sounds of nature are also part of Knoxville's soundtrack.** Located just three miles from downtown, Knoxville's Urban Wilderness is a spectacular 1000-acre outdoor adventure area where you can hike, bike, climb, paddle or just wander in the woods – within the heart of the city. Over 50 miles of trails and greenways connect a nature center, pristine lakes, historic sites, quarries, adventure playgrounds, city parks and 500-acre wildlife area. The city also features more than 85 miles of greenway connecting all facets of the city.

### Culture Meets Cuisine

***Knoxville is home to award-winning museums and attractions that educate, entertain and inspire.***

The Knoxville Museum of Art celebrates the art and artists of East Tennessee. The KMA presents an engaging schedule of exhibitions and is home to Richard Jolley's Cycle of Life, one of the largest figurative glass-and-steel assemblages in the world. To supplement the arts in our community, TYS has its own art exhibition space that features the artistic talents of the region. To grow this program, TYS has invested in an Art Master Plan.



## The Community (*continued*)

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Other popular Knoxville attractions include the **Women's Basketball Hall of Fame**, an international museum dedicated to preserving the history of women's basketball; the **East Tennessee History Center**, home to exhibits that tell the history of the people, places and events that shaped this region; **McClung Museum**, where exhibits showcase the geological, historical, and artistic past of Tennessee and cultures from around the globe; and **Zoo Knoxville**, one of the premiere zoological experiences in the southeast where guests come face to face with the world's most fascinating animals.

**Knoxville has more than its fair share of Culinary Arts as well.** With a heavy focus on locally sourced foods, Knoxville's unique culinary scene is shaped by a group of talented chefs including Tennessee's first James Beard Award Winner: Joseph Lenn. Lenn is one of several Blackberry Farm chefs who operate restaurants in Knoxville.

The city is also building a name for itself as one of the best craft beer towns in the Southeast, a place to relax with some of the country's finest beers and finest people.

The pure walkability of downtown's **Market Square**, historic **Gay Street** and **The Old City** allows people to explore and discover vibrant murals, local music, historic sites, art galleries, shops and more than 80 restaurants (nearly all local), bars and rooftop patios.

Beyond downtown, from East to West, North to South, Knoxville offers a variety of places and activities to explore. West Knoxville features some of the area's finest shopping. East Knoxville is home to the Knoxville Botanical Garden & Arboretum and two of the city's seven historic homes. And North and South offer their fair share of parks, restaurants and gathering spots.

As mentioned, Knoxville is home to the flagship campus of the **University of Tennessee**, one of the nation's oldest state universities, but it's clearly more than a college town.

The state of Tennessee does not collect income tax. Combine the area's picturesque beauty and many cultural attractions and it is easy to see how people quickly fall in love with this city.

Click here to view a [short video](#) about living in Knoxville.

***With a sophisticated mix of culture and cuisine, served up with genuine hospitality, Knoxville will surprise you.***



## The Position

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Are you an operational leader with a strategic mindset, sound decision-making, and attention to employee contributions and engagement? Do you thrive in a complex environment, navigating regulations, safety protocols, budget management, and operational effectiveness, all while excelling in customer satisfaction? If this resonates with you, then the opportunity to join the MKAA team as the Chief Operating Officer awaits!

### Responsibilities

As the Chief Operating Officer, you will lead a team of operations, maintenance, and safety professionals in overseeing the planning and timely response to the daily needs of airport activities in a 24-hour work environment. Your role extends to identifying opportunities, leveraging agreements, and optimizing efficiencies to meet both current and future organizational demands.

You will play a pivotal role in building and developing a high-performing leadership team, ensuring the airport is well-positioned to advance organizational initiatives. With growth on the horizon, your strategic vision and leadership will be instrumental in achieving success.

### Key Duties

- Lead Operations & Safety Department staff in planning, coordination, and management of daily operations, including Airfield and Facilities Maintenance, Building Services, Airfield Operations, Public Safety, General Aviation, Technology, and Procurement.
- Direct the overall operations, maintenance, and care of facilities, ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements.
- Oversee the development, operations, and maintenance of technology and communications systems.
- Supervise safety and emergency management through the Public Safety team.
- Manage general aviation and foster business/community engagement for Downtown Island (DKX) and McGhee Tyson (TYS) airports.
- Provide strategic leadership, develop and implement department procedures, and recommend organization-wide policies aligning with MKAA organizational goals.
- Ensure the efficient and effective day-to-day operations of TYS and DKX, focusing on airfield, public, workplace safety, and regulatory compliance.





## Preferred Experience

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- Bachelor's degree in management, engineering, or a related field. Equivalent experience will be considered if ability to meet position requirements is demonstrated by candidate. .
- Over nine (9) years of management experience in a Part 139 certificated airport, with duties including maintenance, operations, safety, project management, and strategy development.
- Professional certifications in the industry are preferred.

## Qualifications

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- In-depth knowledge of principles, practices, and regulations related to airport operations.
- Familiarity with federal regulations related to airport safety, security, and National Incident Management System.
- Proficiency in business and management principles, strategic planning, resource allocation, leadership techniques, production methods, and coordination of people and resources.
- Strong skills in defining strategy, providing direction, and making decisions on resource allocation.
- Expertise in operating and capital budgeting.

For a detailed job description, [click here](#).

If you are ready to make a significant impact in airport operations and contribute to northeast Tennessee's aviation and travel landscape, we want to hear from you!





## Salary and Compensation

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The starting salary range for this position is \$170,600 - \$221,800. An exceptional candidate may be eligible to receive a starting salary slightly above the range with approvals. MKAA offers a competitive benefit package for this position including medical/dental benefits, disability/life insurance, a 401(a) retirement program and relocation assistance. Final salary offer will be dependent upon experience.

## How To Apply

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To apply online, [click here](#).

**Deadline for applications: May 5, 2024**

The contacts for this search are:

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**Please note:** After your application is complete, you will receive an important email from us. Please check your inbox and your junk/spam folder, and if you have not received our email, please notify us at:

[admin@adkexecutivesearch.com](mailto:admin@adkexecutivesearch.com).

The Metropolitan Knoxville Airport Authority is an equal opportunity employer.

