

Abilene Trophy now on Display at Madison County Administration Building

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Since the St. Louis Region formally accepted the prestigious Abilene Trophy acknowledging the extensive support demonstrated for the airmen of Scott Air Force Base (AFB), and their families, the trophy has travelled from community to community so that those providing the support could see it up close. This week, it arrived in Edwardsville where it is now on display in a glass case in the lobby of the Madison County Administration building. The display, which will remain in place through early January also includes highlights from the nomination that helped to capture the honor for the St. Louis region in recognition of its support for, and collaboration with, Scott Air Force Base and the men and women who work in and are part of our communities.

While Scott AFB base may be located in St. Clair County, its impact is felt throughout the Metro East and across the river in Missouri, and the support for the base is as widespread as its impact. Madison County accounts for 10 percent of the personnel, retirees and dependents who work with Scott Air Force Base, a total of 6,956 individuals. Over 12% - \$36.3 million - of the total annual expenditures of Scott Air Force Base are made in Madison County. And more than \$121.5 million in payroll is distributed in Madison County, representing 9% of the total payroll.

“Those who live in, work in, or operate a business in Madison County recognize just how important Scott Air Force Base is right here in our own communities and to the region at large,” noted Madison County Board Chairman Alan Dunstan. “We’re delighted to have the trophy here in the County seat so that it can be seen by the individuals and businesses throughout Madison County that do so much for the heroes at Scott Air Force Base and their families.”

Also known as the Air Mobility Command Community Support Award, the prestigious Abilene Trophy is presented annually to recognize the community that provides the finest support to an Air Mobility Command unit. The Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois spearheaded the winning nomination on behalf of the communities around the base, Madison and St. Clair Counties and the broader St. Louis region.

“We couldn’t have done it without the contributions from the various individuals, businesses, organizations and communities we reached out to, that told us what they did to support the base during 2012, and the dozens of letters of endorsement from local, state and federal legislators and regional businesses that helped to make our case,” noted Ronda Sauget, President of the Leadership Council. “The overwhelming response to our region-wide call for information, including the response from Madison County, demonstrated the depth of our region’s commitment to Scott AFB and was instrumental in our ability to develop a winning package.”

As the Department of Defense (DOD) continues to look for ways to cut costs and the potential of another round of Base Realignment and Closure looms on the horizon, capturing the Abilene Trophy serves to demonstrate the continued community support for Scott AFB. That is one important factor the DOD considers when looking at which bases to add to, take from or close. Madison County is committed to continuing that support as a participant in the recently launched

Scott Patriot Program, while also co-chairing the Task Force formed earlier this year by Madison and St. Clair Counties and the Leadership Council to serve as “one voice” in providing regional support for retention and expansion efforts at Scott AFB.

About the Abilene Award

The AMC Community Support Award was established on 1 January 1999 by the Military Affairs Committee of Abilene, Texas, and the United States Air Force Air Mobility Command. The award originated in 1989 under a different Command but Air Mobility Command assumed sponsorship of the award in 1999, at which time it was renamed the Abilene Trophy. The award is now presented annually by the Abilene Chamber of Commerce (ACOC) Military Affairs Committee and the Commander, Air Mobility Command to a civilian community for outstanding support to a nearby AMC base. The award is sponsored by the ACOC Military Affairs Committee, and administered jointly by the committee and the Air Mobility Command Office of Public Affairs. The award is to provide recognition for activities conducted between January and December of the preceding year.

The City of Abilene is not eligible to receive this award. For more information, contact Debra Morotini at the Abilene Chamber of Commerce at (325) 677-7241 or at dmorotini@abilenechamber.com.

About the Leadership Council

The Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois is a member-based, economic development corporation representing Madison and St. Clair counties. The Council works to unite business, industry, government, education and labor for economic growth in Southwestern Illinois. These effective partnerships serve as a driving force behind successful economic development efforts throughout the Metro East region. www.leadershipcouncilswil.com.

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