

Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce

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THE CHAMBER
WICHITA REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

NEWS RELEASE

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Wichita group receives national award for support of McConnell Air Force Base

Wichita, KS – The Friends of McConnell, an affiliate of the Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce, was announced as the recipient of the 2016 Abilene Trophy on April 28 at the Phoenix Rally at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois. Since 1998, the award has been presented annually to the community that demonstrates the most support of its local Air Force Base. Also known as the Air Mobility Command Community Support Award, the trophy is awarded by the Abilene Chamber of Commerce’s Military Affairs Committee.

To apply for the award, Friends of McConnell submitted a nearly-200 page document outlining how the Wichita region supports the airmen of McConnell Air Force Base. The document included examples of how the community worked alongside the military in preparation for the arrival of the KC-46, the re-designation of the 931st Air Refueling Wing from a group to a wing, and honoring the heritage and mission contributions associated with the 60th anniversary of the KC-135.

Pat Gallagher, Military Affairs Liaison for the Wichita Chamber, said Friends of McConnell was honored to receive the award on behalf of the entire Wichita community. “Wichita loves our Airmen and recognizes the vital role they play in our community,” she said. “I’ve been involved with McConnell for 25 years and I appreciate those who serve there tremendously. They are the very best this nation has to offer.”

A local award presentation and celebration will take place at 7:30 a.m. on Wednesday, June 14 where the Chair of the Abilene Chamber will unveil the trophy and present it to the Friends of McConnell. McConnell Commanders will be present to express their appreciation to our regional partners for their overwhelming support. The event will be hosted by Friends University. Find more information and register for the event [here](#).

Col. Al Miller, 22nd Air Refueling Wing Commander, said he was pleased the Wichita area was recognized. “For any Airman who is serving his or her first assignment and is fortunate enough to have been assigned to McConnell Air Force Base, they will struggle for the rest of their careers to find a community as supportive as this one. Wichita and the surrounding communities set the bar extremely high. This community is the very best.”

McConnell Air Force Base has an annual economic impact on the Wichita region of \$800 million. The [Friends of McConnell](#) seeks to express community pride and appreciation of the area's military by providing organizational and financial support for Commander-directed programs at McConnell Air Force Base. A primary goal of the group is to make McConnell the most desirable assignment of an Airman’s career.

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The mission of the Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce is to drive economic growth and community advancement in the Wichita region. Visit our website wichitachamber.org and follow us on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, and our blog.