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Phoenix-area airports offering high-end aircraft storage, office space for business jet owners

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No place to park the jet? That's because the Valley has an eight-year waiting list for those needing hangar space.

With increasing numbers of business travelers using corporate jets, accommodations catering to business jet setters are springing up at general aviation airports across the Valley.

"This is something that's needed and wanted by businesses that have corporate jets," said hangar developer Bob Reid, president of **Exec Jet Holdings**. "They're flying \$20 million jets, so they're demanding that kind of treatment."

These facilities, far surpassing those at sprawling public passenger terminals, offer an ease of travel that business-class passengers can only dream about: no ticket hassles, no lines, no security checkpoints, no rummaging through luggage, no getting bumped by overbooking and no hurrying to meet connecting flights.

Many of these facilities will provide offices with Internet access and other amenities, allowing companies to operate a branch office where they keep their aircraft.

At **Glendale Municipal Airport**, fixed-base operator **Lux Air Jet Centers** partner Robert Banovac said his company plans to build and lease 200,000 square feet of hangar space with accompanying offices and maintenance facilities on 135 acres. He said the facility will accommodate everything from single-engine propeller aircraft to twin-engine Gulfstream 5 jets.

"We have pretty much a fresh canvas to build a world-class facility that will rival the 'big kahuna' (Hangar 1 at **Scottsdale Airport**)," said Banovac. "We hope to take a dent out of some of their business."

Lux Air purchased Sun Western Flyers in March and will take over its aircraft maintenance operations at the Goodyear and Yuma airports, Banovac said.

During the Super Bowl, Glendale Airport had 57 corporate jets on the field, said Glendale





Airport Administrator Judy Skeen. On an average day, there are three to seven corporate aircraft at the municipal airport, said Lux Air General Manager Les Wenger.

The skies will be friendlier over Falcon Field in Mesa, too.

"The city has been aggressively marketing Falcon Field for hangar and commercial aviation business development," said Bill Jabjiniak, Mesa's economic development director.

And it's paying off: Eight companies are developing facilities on 40-year leased property there, and four of those are planning hangars with adjacent office space.

One of those developers is Exec Jet Holdings, which will "condo-ize" its hangars and offices and then sell them to corporations rather than lease them. It's a new idea, Reid said.

"We've had a huge amount of interest in development out here at Falcon," said Airport Director Corinne Nystrom. "A lot of these developers are going to bring in aviation services to the airport. I couldn't even put a number on it at this point. It's into the several million dollars in direct worth."

Last December, Phoenix **Deer Valley Airport** announced a request for proposals to bring in new development. The deadline was March 17, said Airport Manager Gary Mascaro. He declined to name the interested companies.

Deer Valley Airport doesn't have any facilities catering to corporate air travel now, but the airport's master plan dedicates 40 acres at its southeast corner to corporate development, he said.

"During the Super Bowl, we were very busy with corporate aircraft," Mascaro said.

At **Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport**, in addition to corporate hangars with corporate offices, plans include extensive aircraft and repair facilities for corporate aircraft, said airport spokesman Brian Sexton. He envisions corporate jets from all over the Valley flying to Gateway for maintenance within the next five years.

Crown Air, an aircraft maintenance company based in San Diego, will open a 13-acre aircraft maintenance business at Gateway in 2009 for service on all types of aircraft.

"That would rival what you see over at Hangar 1," Sexton said.

The prize for Gateway, he said, is that corporate and pleasure aircraft builder Cessna is moving its Long Beach maintenance operations there.

Sexton said it's conceivable that corporate travelers could schedule golf outings around their aircraft maintenance schedules, which could take a week.