



DETROIT METRO • WILLOW RUN  
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# News Release

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## Snow Crews at Detroit Metro & Willow Run Airports Honored

*--Balchen/Post Award dedicated to airport employees*

Both airports operated by the Wayne County Airport Authority were honored for "...outstanding performance in airport snow and ice control," by the American Association of Airport Executives. Snow crews at Detroit Metropolitan Airport (DTW) and Willow Run Airport (YIP) received "honorable mentions" in an award ceremony appropriately conducted in Buffalo, NY last week.

Airfield Maintenance crews at DTW and YIP were constantly challenged during the 2004-2005 winter with a dozen snow storms of two or more inches. On December 23, one of the busiest travel days of the year, nearly nine inches of blowing snow was cleared in single digit temperatures and winds gusting from 17 to 30 MPH. On January 22, over a foot of wind-driven snow fell in less than nine hours. Despite on and off white-out conditions, the airlines were able to operate nearly normally. January's 26.9 total inches of snow made it the third snowiest January on record. Old Man Winter's onslaught continued in February when 12.5 inches of snow fell. The storm on February 20 featured almost six inches of snow, including 3.5 inches between 3pm and 5pm, along with winds of 16-24 MPH, rain, freezing rain, freezing fog and sleet. Again, exceptional performance by the snow team meant few disruptions to flight schedules.

"I can't tell you how proud I am of the men and women who perform snow removal operations for the authority," said Lester Robinson WCAA CEO. "This was an incredibly difficult winter and our folks came through with flying colors. Further complicating the challenge was the Yankee Air Force fire which also completely destroyed our maintenance building at Willow Run, including all of the equipment inside. The resourcefulness and dedication exhibited this winter—and actually as late as April 24, is truly worthy of our admiration and gratitude."

The Balchen/Post award is granted annually by the Northeast Chapter of AAAE, and this year, Michigan airports fared well. Southwest Michigan Regional Airport in Benton Harbor won in the "Small General Aviation Airport" category. Cherry Capital Airport in Traverse City won in the "Medium Commercial Airport" category where Willow Run

received honorable mention. Detroit Metropolitan, along with LaGuardia, won honorable mention in the “Large Commercial Airport” category, which was won by Boston Logan.

Col Bernt Balchen was a famous Arctic explorer and war hero, who was the first pilot to fly over both the north and south poles. The former president of Norwegian Airlines, and founder of the International Aviation Snow Symposium is buried in Arlington National Cemetery next to Admiral Richard Byrd. Wilfred M. “Wiley” Post was the general chairman of the International Aviation Snow Symposium for 20 years.

The awards selection committee, which includes representatives of airlines, aviation organizations, airline pilots, the Department of Defense and the Federal Aviation Administration makes it clear that this award is for airport employees responsible for snow and ice control.

“There were a lot of passengers who enjoyed on-time flights this winter because of the dedication and perseverance of our airfield maintenance crews,” said WCAA’s Director of Maintenance and Power, Joseph Eagan.

NR Balchen Award-2005