



COURTESY OF NATIONAL JETS AIR CENTER, FORT LAUDERDALE, FLA.

# THE BEST FBOs

## an exclusive survey reveals the best places to park your jet

ONE BIG SURPRISE for new business jet travelers is the discovery of a strong aviation infrastructure to take care of jets and their occupants at airports all over the world. Every year, our sister magazine, *Aviation International News*, asks its readers to rate these companies—known as fixed-base operators, or FBOs—on a one-to-10 scale in four key categories: line service; passenger amenities; pilot amenities and services; and facilities.

While passenger amenities constitute just one of the four categories, they clearly represent a high priority for FBOs. Over the years, these amenities have grown better and more useful. Most FBO managers recognize that business travelers typically care little about gold-plated bathroom fixtures, but also that well-equipped conference rooms, paparazzi-free private lounges and a theater room for the occasional long wait can make spending time in FBOs a pleasure rather than a tedious stop.

The facilities that made the list of the Top 40 FBOs in

the Americas (*see next page*) represent the cream of the crop, and if you fly regularly on business jets, you no doubt recognize more than one of them. You'll find full survey results for the Americas and the rest of the world at [www.bjtonline.com/buyers-guide/directories](http://www.bjtonline.com/buyers-guide/directories).

For the 2009 FBO Survey, one surprising result was the toppling of Memphis' Wilson Air Center from the top spot, which it has held for many years. Now number two, this facility is owned by Bob Wilson, son of Holiday Inn founder Kemmons Wilson, who was no stranger to the need for stellar customer service. Wilson Air Center's score remains high at 8.97, but a city-owned and -run FBO, Sugar Land Regional Airport near Houston, ranked even higher at 9.09.

*Aviation International News* invited 14,687 of its subscribers to participate in the survey and received 2,661 properly completed responses, a return rate of 18.1 percent. Readers rated 41,098 facilities worldwide, an average of roughly 15 per respondent. —Matt Thurber

### WHAT, EXACTLY, IS AN FBO?

FBOs are the aviation equivalent of full-service gas stations. They typically offer a wide range of services. The acronym stands for fixed-base operator, and it had its genesis in the early days of aviation, when itinerant barnstorming pilots flew from field to field and airport to airport, eking out a hardscrabble living selling their services to people who would pay them to fly their raggedy old airplanes. When one of these barnstormers decided to put down roots and run an airport-based business, that operator became "fixed," in the sense of no longer traveling. Some of these operators built thriving businesses, and the company that provided fuel, hangars and other airport services became known as the FBO. The term is now widely used all over the world, despite some efforts to modify it. —M.T.

THE TOP 40-RATED FBOs – U.S. & CANADA

The annual AIN FBO Survey lists top-rated facilities according to the responses from pilots and other users of FBOs. This year, the Top 40 FBOs in the Americas received overall scores of more than 8.00. The categories that users were asked to rate were line service; passenger amenities; pilot services; and facilities.

Rank	FBO	City	Airport	Overall avg.
1	CITY OF SUGAR LAND	Sugar Land	Sugar Land Regional (SGR)	9.09
2	WILSON AIR CENTER	Memphis	Memphis International (MEM)	8.97
3	PENTASTAR AVIATION	Pontiac	Oakland County International (PTK)	8.84
4	BUSINESS JET CENTER	Dallas	Dallas Love Field (DAL)	8.75
5	MERIDIAN TETERBORO	Teterboro	Teterboro (TEB)	8.74
6	AIRFLITE	Long Beach	Long Beach Airport Daugherty Field (LGB)	8.71
7	BANYAN AIR SERVICES	Fort Lauderdale	Fort Lauderdale Executive (FXE)	8.65
8	TAMPA INTERNATIONAL JET CENTER	Tampa	Tampa International (TPA)	8.64
9	MILLION AIR	Dallas	Addison (ADS)	8.63
9	MONTEREY JET CENTER	Monterey	Monterey Peninsula (MRY)	8.63
9	TEXAS JET	Fort Worth	Meacham International (FTW)	8.63
10	ENTERPRISE JET CENTER	Houston	Hobby (HOU)	8.60
10	SCOTTSDALE AIR CENTER	Scottsdale	Scottsdale Municipal (SDL)	8.60
11	IRVING AVIATION SERVICES	Gander, Newfoundland	Gander International (CYQX)	8.57
12	JET AVIATION PALM BEACH	West Palm Beach	Palm Beach International (PBI)	8.55
12	PREMIER AIR	Carlsbad	McClellan-Palomar (CRQ)	8.55
12	SKYSERVICE AVITAT	Toronto, Ontario	Lester B. Pearson Int'l (YYZ)	8.55
13	NATIONAL JETS	Fort Lauderdale	Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood Int'l (FLL)	8.53
14	AVITAT BOCA RATON	Boca Raton	Boca Raton (BCT)	8.47
14	WILSON AIR CENTER	Charlotte	Douglas International (CLT)	8.47
15	ODYSSEY AVIATION (FORMERLY MILLION AIR)	Charleston	Charleston International (CHS)	8.42
16	AVITAT WESTCHESTER	White Plains	Westchester County (HPN)	8.41
16	MILLION AIR	Anchorage	Ted Stevens Anchorage Int'l (ANC)	8.41
17	SWIFT AVIATION SERVICES	Phoenix	Sky Harbor International (PHX)	8.39
18	BRADLEY PACIFIC AVIATION	Honolulu	Honolulu International (HNL)	8.38
19	DENVER JETCENTER	Aspen	Centennial (APA)	8.37
20	ATLANTIC	Waukesha	Waukesha County (UES)	8.36
21	DULLES JET CENTER	Sterling (Dulles)	Washington Dulles Int'l (IAD)	8.35
21	IRVING AVIATION SERVICES	Goose Bay, Newfoundland	Goose Bay (CYJR)	8.35
22	ATLANTIC (FORMERLY SUN VALLEY AVIATION)	Hailey	Friedman Memorial (SUN)	8.34
23	FALCONTRUST AIR	Miami	Kendall-Tamiami Executive (TMB)	8.32
24	AVITAT OTTAWA	Ottawa	MacDonald International (CYOW)	8.30
24	YELLOWSTONE JET CENTER	Bozeman	Gallatin Field (BZN)	8.30
25	JET AVIATION	Teterboro	Teterboro (TEB)	8.28
26	SHELTAIR AVIATION SERVICES	Fort Lauderdale	Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood Int'l (FLL)	8.26
27	MILLION AIR	Houston	Hobby (HOU)	8.25
28	DUNCAN AVIATION	Battle Creek	W.K. Kellogg (BTL)	8.24
29	MILLION AIR	Salt Lake City	Salt Lake City International (SLC)	8.23
30	SHELTAIR AVIATION SERVICES	Jacksonville	Jacksonville International (JAX)	8.21
30	VAIL VALLEY JET CENTER	Denver	Eagle County Regional (EGE)	8.21
31	AVITAT WINNIPEG (CENTRAL AVIATION)	Winnipeg, Manitoba	Manitoba/Winnipeg Int'l (CYWG)	8.20
32	BUSINESS JET CENTER	Oakland	Metropolitan Oakland Int'l (OAK)	8.18
32	DEL MONTE AVIATION (FORMERLY MILLION AIR)	Monterey	Monterey Peninsula (MRY)	8.18
32	EXECUTIVE JET CENTER/AERO TOY STORE	Fort Lauderdale	Fort Lauderdale Executive (FXE)	8.18
33	GALAXY AVIATION	Stuart	Witham Field (SUA)	8.17
34	SUN AIR JETS	Camarillo	Camarillo (CMA)	8.16
35	UVAVEMEX	Toluca	Adolfo Lopez Mateos Int'l (MMTO)	8.15
36	DB AVIATION	Waukegan	Waukegan Regional (UGN)	8.13
37	SHOWALTER FLYING SERVICE	Orlando	Orlando Executive (ORL)	8.12
37	SIGNATURE FLIGHT SUPPORT (FORMERLY MILLION AIR)	Minneapolis	St. Paul Downtown-Holman Field (STP)	8.12
38	HENDERSON EXECUTIVE AIRPORT	Las Vegas	Henderson Executive Airport (HND)	8.11
39	TAC AIR	Raleigh-Durham	Raleigh-Durham International (RDU)	8.10
40	ATLANTIC	Chicago	Chicago Midway International (MDW)	8.09

Source: AIN 2009 Americas FBO survey. Duplicate ranks indicate tied overall averages.

Compiled by Jane Campbell with data provided by Forecast International of Newtown, Conn.