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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **St. Louis County Receives Federal Approval for Foreign Trade Zone Expansion**

St. Louis County Port Authority received approval from the U.S. Department of Commerce Foreign-Trade Zone Board to expand the Foreign-Trade Zone to include new sites around and at Lambert-St. Louis International Airport. The site expansion will allow increased employment opportunities and investment in St. Louis County by encouraging international business activities.

Foreign-trade zones are intended to increase U.S. participation in international trade and foster growth and re-investment. The expansion sites consist of designated areas with existing businesses, land that is in the process of being developed as well as undeveloped land that will be redeveloped to attract new business to the community. These zones allow foreign products to be admitted without being subject to customs duties.

“The Foreign-Trade Zone expansion is another step forward in a long-term effort by community leaders to increase our position in the global marketplace. These expansion sites are part of our re-investment strategy and key locations for businesses engaged in international trade,” said St. Louis County Executive Charlie A. Dooley.

The expansion zone sites include (1) NorthPark, a 550-acre redevelopment located east of Lambert-St. Louis International Airport; (2) Hazelwood Commerce Center, an industrial park on nearly 170 acres, directly northwest of Lambert and Interstates 70 and 170; (3) Lindbergh Distribution Center, a 528,000 square foot distribution warehouse located southwest of the former Ford plant in Hazelwood; and (4) a 75-acre airport-owned tract adjacent to Lambert.”

“This is great news for St. Louis County and economic development. The expansion of the Foreign-Trade Zone provides the region a real advantage as we as work to develop future job growth through increased economic activity with China and other countries. This also can benefit local companies that locate in the Trade Zone as they expand into foreign markets,” said St. Louis Lambert-International Airport Director Dick Hrabko.

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The approval is also important to the China Hub Commission, a group of local and state leaders who have been working with the Chinese for about a year about the opportunity for establishing the St. Louis region as a multi-state commercial hub for China.

“Through comprehensive studies and assessments, we have found that making St. Louis a Midwest cargo hub to China would present significant advantages to many shippers who are now using Chicago’s O’Hare and other airports,” said Chairman of the China Hub Commission, Mike Jones. “In addition, the commercial hub will help expand markets for Midwest products and open up new opportunities for Missouri workers.”

Through a recently approved grant received by the St. Louis County Economic Council, to the Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration’s (EDA) Economic Adjustment Assistance Program, the Commission also will receive \$1,725,000 in an effort to help create jobs for Missouri workers.

**About St. Louis County Economic Council (SLCEC)**

SLCEC provides innovative solutions to companies and communities through business development, financing programs, business incubator opportunities, real estate and community development programs, and international expertise through the World Trade Center Saint Louis.

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