



METROPOLITAN AIRPORTS COMMISSION

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James Lawrence appointed chair of Metropolitan Airports Commission

Twin Cities business leader has served on the MAC board since 2021



Newly appointed MAC Chair James Lawrence. Courtesy: Metropolitan Airports Commission

MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL, Minn. — Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz has appointed James Lawrence as chair of the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) board, which oversees Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) and six general aviation airports in the Twin Cities.

Lawrence currently chairs the commission's Planning, Development and Environment Committee and is acting vice chair of the 15-member board. He was first appointed by Walz in 2021 to represent a central Twin Cities district that includes the communities of Bloomington and Richfield, which border MSP Airport. Lawrence will begin his new leadership role on Jan. 21, replacing former Chair Rick King, who retired in November 2025. Commissioner Patti Gartland has served as acting chair since King's retirement.

"I am honored by Gov. Walz's appointment and proud to serve the state of Minnesota in this role, with great appreciation for former Chair King, Acting Chair Gartland and my fellow commissioners for their service and dedication to the MAC," Lawrence said. "I'm looking forward to working with a tremendous commission staff that operates one of the largest airports systems in the country. That includes MSP Airport, which has earned the highest honors in the industry and provides global travel and business connections that greatly benefit Minnesota."

"We congratulate James Lawrence on his elevation to MAC board chair," said Brian Ryks, CEO of the MAC. "The MAC's airports facilitate travel for millions of people annually and deeply support regional business partners and other stakeholders. Commissioner Lawrence's proven leadership will help guide the positive impact our airports have on Minnesotans and our state's economy."

Lawrence has an extensive international business background with numerous corporate leadership positions. Having moved to Minnesota in 1996, he currently serves as chair of a Minneapolis-based private investment firm. Lawrence was previously executive director and chief financial officer of Unilever, based in London. He also served as chief financial officer at General Mills and executive vice president and chief financial officer of Northwest Airlines. Prior to that, Lawrence was CEO of Pepsi-Cola Asia, Middle East and Africa. He also co-founded the LEK Partnership.

Since 1990, Lawrence has served as an executive or director of eight airlines, both legacy and low-cost.

In total, Lawrence has served as director of 18 public companies, several private companies and numerous nonprofits.

Lawrence earned a Bachelor of Arts in economics from Yale University and a Master of Business Administration from Harvard Business School.

Together, MSP and the MAC's six general aviation airports — also known as reliever airports for reducing congestion at the primary commercial airport — supported more than 714,000 aircraft operations in 2024. The general aviation airports are all located within 35 miles of the

downtowns of Minneapolis or St. Paul: Airlake (LVN) in Lakeville, Anoka County-Blaine (ANE), Crystal (MIC), Flying Cloud (FCM) in Eden Prairie, Lake Elmo (21D) and St. Paul Downtown (STP).

MSP is the 17th busiest airport by passengers in the United States, serving 37.2 million passengers in 2024. Fifteen commercial airlines provide nonstop service to 166 destinations. MSP is the second-largest hub for Delta Air Lines and serves as the home base for Sun Country Airlines.

About The Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC)

The Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) owns and operates one of the nation's largest airport systems, including [Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport \(MSP\)](#) and six general aviation airports. MAC's airports connect the region to the world and showcase Minnesota's extraordinary culture to millions of passengers from around the globe who arrive or depart through MAC airports each year. Though a public corporation of the state of Minnesota, the organization is not funded by income or property taxes. Instead, the MAC's operations are funded by rents and fees generated by users of its airports. For more information, visit www.metroairports.org.

Minneapolis-St. Paul International • Airlake • Anoka County-Blaine • Crystal • Flying Cloud • Lake Elmo • St. Paul Downtown