

For Immediate Release
January 15, 2025

Media Contact: Kim Hunt
Birmingham Airport Authority
khunt@flybhm.com
#205-510-6676

Operation “Cooling Tower” Creates a High-Flying Spectacle at Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport

Key Part of Airport Air Conditioning System Replaced During Elaborate Helicopter Lift and Transport Operation

BIRMINGHAM, AL (January 15, 2024) – Like a scene out of a movie, Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport (BHM) conducted an equipment replacement operation that involved a helicopter lifting, transporting, and lowering cooling towers in various locations. The project was carefully designed to remove a cooling tower from the roof of a building which is located in the center of the parking deck and replace it with a new one. See video of Operation “Cooling Tower” here: <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/v3klirfcw12ugzi20jwq3/AGqmic7d7F-FugvhTEW74lg?e=1&rlkey=ylgi0c2v4ybc7ep5ccj32u3i6&st=yuguiuyc&dl=0>

Cooling towers are heat exchangers that use water and air to transfer heat from air-conditioning systems. BHM has three main cooling towers: one serves as primary and two serve as backup, which activate as the need arises. One of them had reached its useful life and needed to be replaced with a new one. Due to the location of the cooling towers and the weight of the units, a helicopter known as a Sikorsky S-64 Sky Crane was used to complete the mission. The contractor was required to coordinate all activities including safety plans, traffic control, and the actual disconnecting and installation of piping, electrical, and programming for the new unit.

“This project was not your everyday equipment replacement,” said Matthew Nelson, Vice President of Facilities for the Birmingham Airport Authority. “Replacing the cooling tower required a highly specialized operation with a lot of attention to detail,” said Nelson. “The new cooling tower will help ensure a comfortable, cool environment for customers when they come through the terminal this summer and for years to come.”

McAbee Construction, Inc. of Tuscaloosa was awarded the contract back in September after submitting a bid of \$691,596 for completion of the project.

About Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport

As Alabama's largest commercial airport, Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport has served as a gateway to the sky for more than 90 years. Governed by the Birmingham Airport Authority, the airport continues to be a catalyst for growth and economic development for the entire region. For more information, visit flybhm.com or follow BHM on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

###