

Push begins to make Gateway a cargo hub

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Tickets to board the Southeast Valley's giant air cargo experience will go on sale next month.

Organizers of a plan to turn Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport into an international cargo hub will seek about \$100,000 in funding to market the concept and get it off the ground, airport officials said Tuesday.

Prospective contributors include the airport's five-member governing board, Arizona State University-Polytechnic, whose campus is adjacent to the airport, the airport's five-member governing authority and Paragon Properties, a Carefree-based partnership that plans to build a major trade center on more than 900 acres south of the airport, said John Barry, the airport's marketing and development director.

"Marketing is a key component to get the project moving," he said. "The next step will be going to companies like the Intels and Honeywells to determine how much they're **shipping** and to what destinations and what they are receiving in the import side," he said.

The information will be used to layout a plan to approach industry for air cargo service capable of producing millions in revenue and creating hundreds of jobs, Barry said.

Valley and national **business** analysts have described the airport as a looming international player for direct air freight deliveries to and from international markets.

The project is called Arizona Direct and was orchestrated by Valley business, government and public entities to equip and market the airport as a worldclass cargo hub.

The project also seeks to provide direct rail access and establish regional truck service, aerospace research and development and **manufacturing**.

Barry said businesses importing and exporting goods can reduce costs by as much as 54 percent, save fuel and lower carbon emissions by moving international freight through Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport and its duty-free Foreign Trade Zone instead of hauling it to and from California's airports and seaports.

It also would give the state a leg up to compete globally, he said.

The project, which has been in planning for almost two years, is planned to evolve in steps as it is marketed to the domestic and international manufacturing industry, cargo service airlines and trucking companies and Union Pacific Railroad.

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