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ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES TOP HONORS RECIPIENTS

Alexandria, VA, February 16, 2010 — On April 21, 2010, the National Air Transportation (NATA) will bestow two of its highest honors, the [William A. "Bill" Ong Memorial Award](#) and the [NATA Award for Distinguished Service](#), during its annual Industry Excellence Awards Dinner to be held at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington, D.C. This year's Industry Excellence Awards Dinner will be held in conjunction with NATA's Day on the Hill Day, Annual Meeting and Election of Officers.

NATA is thrilled to announce that Gary Driggers, long-time executive at Midcoast Aviation, has been selected as this year's recipient for the William A. "Bill" Ong Memorial Award. Driggers, a former NATA chairman and member of the board of directors, recently retired from Midcoast Aviation after 22 years of service. As senior vice president, Driggers was responsible for managing key customer and vendor relationships and was the company's face to industry organizations and OEMs. He started his career in aviation when he served his country as a helicopter pilot during the Vietnam War. Before joining Midcoast Aviation in 1988, he had been a client of the St. Louis-based MRO and completions center. During his tenure, Driggers served Midcoast Aviation in various senior management functions, with the company growing from 100 to 1,500 employees.

"Gary is a long-time supporter and friend of the association and this great industry," stated NATA President James K. Coyne. "Gary played an instrumental part in the growth of Midcoast Aviation as well as on the development of NATA's Safety 1st program as an early program advocate and founding member. The NATA Board of Directors is honored to commemorate Gary's devotion to our industry by bestowing upon him the association's highest honor, the William A. "Bill" Ong Memorial Award."

The NATA Award for Distinguished Service will be presented to the Honorable Jerry Costello (D-IL), Chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Aviation. Costello, a long-time supporter of the general aviation community, began his career shortly after his graduation from high school, working full time as a law enforcement officer while attending college. After graduating from Maryville University, Costello became recognized throughout the state for his creativity and ability in administering the region's court services system. In 1980, he was elected chairman of the St. Clair County Board, chief executive for one of Illinois' largest counties. He took that experience to Congress in August 1988. As a

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senior Democrat on the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the second-ranking Democrat on the House Committee on Science and Technology, Costello has had a prominent role in writing several major pieces of legislation while focusing on improving the transportation infrastructure of our nation and his district. Costello is currently in his third year as chairman of the House Subcommittee on Aviation. In 2007, he wrote and led passage of the \$68 billion bill in the House to reauthorize the programs of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to ensure that this nation's air transportation system remains the safest in the world.

“The NATA Board of Directors is deeply honored to celebrate the many outstanding legislative accomplishments achieved by Chairman Costello,” stated Coyne. “Chairman Costello’s drive to advance aviation safety and implement NextGen, in addition to his steadfast leadership in shepherding an FAA Reauthorization bill void of user fees, makes him the perfect choice as this year’s recipient of NATA’s Distinguished Service Award.”

The association will also be honoring winners for the following awards during its Industry Excellence Awards Dinner on April 21st including:

- [Airport Executive Partnership Award](#)
- [Aviation Journalism Award](#)
- [Excellence in Pilot Training Award](#)
- [FAA Customer Excellence Award](#)
- [ATP/NATA General Aviation Service Technician Award](#)

[To learn more about NATA’s Industry Excellence Awards Dinner and annual Day on the Hill event, please click here.](#)

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