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U.S. Forest Service Returns to Williams Gateway Airport

MESA, ARIZ. --- In preparation for this year's fire season, The U.S. Forest Service has returned to Williams Gateway Airport. Last year, the U.S. Forest Service conducted 252 sorties, using more than 670,000 gallons of retardant on 17 fires in Arizona, California, and New Mexico, while spending an estimated total of \$880,000 in the local economy.

U.S. Forest Service Department Airtanker Base Manager Bob Madill said, "Williams Gateway Airport provided much needed aerial support for the second largest fire in Arizona history and was instrumental in helping to protect the communities of Payson, Pine, and Strawberry. The Airport also helped save the \$200 million Mt. Graham telescope complex. Without the use of Williams for airtanker operations, these fires could have had far more devastating results."

Because fire-fighting aircraft often fly at low altitudes, they occasionally generate noise complaints. Residents concerned with noise should call the Airport's noise complaint line at 480-929-7902.

The Airport is owned and operated by the Williams Gateway Airport Authority, which includes the Gila River Indian Community, Gilbert, Mesa and Queen Creek. For more information, visit www.flywga.org.