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JAMES L. OBERSTAR NAMED 2009 TONY JANNUS AWARD WINNER

Chairman, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Honored for Contributions to Commercial Aviation

ST. PETERSBURG, FLA. (May 7, 2009) – Arguably the top expert on transportation issues in the United States Congress, and in his 18th term in Congress, Rep. James L. Oberstar of Minnesota has been named the recipient of the 2009 Tony Jannus Award. Celebrating those with outstanding achievements, leadership and perseverance within the airlines industry, the Tony Jannus Distinguished Aviation Society will present the Award to Rep. Oberstar at a dinner banquet at the Tampa Airport Marriott on Thursday, November 5, 2009.

Currently in his second term as Chairman of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Rep. Oberstar's experience with the committee stretches back to 1963 (the year before the inaugural Tony Jannus Award) when he joined the staff of his predecessor, Rep. John Blatnik. Elected to Congress in 1974, Rep. Oberstar has served on what is now the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for the past 28 years, along the way chairing the Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight, and the Subcommittee on Aviation. From 1995 through 2007, Rep. Oberstar served as the Ranking Democratic Member on the Committee. Now, as chairman, he is engaged in the crafting of a new, transformational, six-year surface transportation authorization bill and will be bringing it to the floor of the House in the coming months.

A tireless advocate for safety and fair competition in air travel, Rep. Oberstar has also helped preserve and expand programs to improve air quality, protect the environment, enhance mass transit, and expand facilities for bicycle and pedestrian travel as part of our national transportation system. A native of Chisholm, Minnesota and the son of an iron ore worker, Rep. Oberstar is Minnesota's all-time longest serving Member of Congress.

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Since its first nominee in 1964, the Tony Jannus list of winners has grown to a virtual “Who’s Who” in the industry, including such luminaries as Brigadier General Charles Yeager, Donald W. Douglas, Sr., Capt. Edward V. Rickenbacker, Col. Frank Borman, Herb Kelleher, Sir Richard Branson, Joseph Leonard, Colleen Barrett and the 2008 honoree Larry Kellner of Continental Airlines. In addition to the Tony Jannus Award program, the Tony Jannus Distinguished Aviation Society recognizes outstanding local students with an annual essay contest and presents cash awards to deserving university students as part of the Society's Scholarships Awards Program.

The Tampa and St. Petersburg Chambers of Commerce established The Tony Jannus Distinguished Aviation Society in 1964. The Smithsonian Institute recognized Tony Jannus as the founder of the world’s first scheduled airline. The airline - which began flights on New Year’s Day, 1914 - had only one plane, a single-engine Benoist flying boat that flew round trips daily between Tampa and St. Petersburg, Florida. For more information on the Tony Jannus Distinguished Aviation Society please visit www.TonyJannusAward.com.

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