

FedEx Express Super Hub and Memphis International Airport, (Memphis Tennessee)

Since its founding in 1819, the city of Memphis Tennessee has occupied a unique and powerful position in the growth of North American logistics and communications infrastructures. Referring to itself as “North America’s Distribution Center,” Memphis’ location along the eastern bank of the Mississippi River in southwestern Tennessee has privileged the region as an important East-West crossroads within the United States. While the Mississippi River has historically formed the continental division between eastern and western United States, the river, in conjunction with expansions in freight rail networks and the Interstate Highway system has provided the region with one of the most efficient systems to transport bulk cargo in the country. Over the decades however, Memphis has positioned itself as a palpable international trade hub as well with the establishment of the FedEx Express Super Hub at Memphis International airport in 1973. Located just three miles south of Memphis’ central business district, the FedEx Super Hub has since grown into a city all its own, employing more than 15,000 people, while maintaining a fleet of 75,000 trucks and 684 jets.

Less than two miles north of the Mississippi State Border, the FedEx Super Hub and Memphis International Airport are circumscribed by Interstate 240 to the north, Interstate 69 to the west and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Rail Depot to the east. Within this infrastructurally circumscribed geography, FedEx’s hub in Memphis has universal connectivity to all major global markets. From its hub in Memphis, airfreight is sorted and routed to one of four major North American sorting facilities either in Newark, Oakland, Fort Worth or Indianapolis. Cargo destined for locations within less than “one day’s truck drive” or approximately 400-500 miles of the sorting facility is trucked via Interstate to a local FedEx facility, while air freight bound for destinations farther than one day’s truck drive is flown to regional airports, via a contracted cargo airline and delivered to a local facility closer to its final destination. International cargo is routed to one of five major global sorting hubs in Narita Japan, Guangzhou China, São Paulo Brazil, London England or Paris France and delivered to either regional FedEx facilities or contracted out to other air freight couriers and flown to the country of destination.

In looking at its facilities on the ground, the scale of FedEx’s operations in Memphis is given truly human dimension. At its busiest peaks, FedEx’s hub in Memphis operates revolving shifts of ground staff on twenty-four hour cycles, with fueling, maintenance and security staff working all day cycles throughout the year. These continuous cycles of labor, transportation and goods in Memphis mirror the truly global mechanics of the FedEx network, constantly at work at an international level. At any given time somewhere in the world, day-time labor and movement corresponds with night-time operations somewhere else, literally dissolving the physical and geopolitical boundaries that identify and locate the operations. Both time and geography are conflated by FedEx’s network, making the only barriers relevant in this system the ones created by the aviation and auto infrastructures that enable FedEx’s operation. The geospatial logic of FedEx’s operations is brought into lucid focus by studying the continental networks of high-capacity freeways and international airports that give global dimension to FedEx, and FedEx’s economic research has shaped an interconnected world where demographic and economic cartograms, not projected geopolitical maps, are the most operative forms of representation for their business. (Sources: FedEx Express Super Hub, news.van.fedex.com/Files/FedEx%20Express%20Super%20Hub%20Memphis.pdf, [Memphisregion.transportation.asp](https://www.memphisregion.transportation.asp), Rushing, Wanda. [Memphis and the Paradox of Place: Globalization in the American South](#). UNC Press, 2009. Pgs. 3, 84-89, Rayport, Jeffery. The Miracle of Memphis in MIT Technology Review. December 2010, [shelbycountyttn.gov/index.aspx?nid=542](https://www.shelbycountyttn.gov/index.aspx?nid=542))



FedEx Super Hub Facility manages a fleet of 684 jets and averages between 150 and 200 plane loadings and reloadings per day (Source: Andre Quiros 2010).



FedEx's Presence in the City shows how overtly the world's largest logistics network relies on its hubs' surrounding infrastructures to operate (Source: Malcolm Miller 2007).

Lat. 35° 00' 35.57"N Long. 89° 57' 12.06"
Alt. 23Km



FedEx Super Hub and Memphis Airport are located adjacent to each other and are flanked by the I-69 and I-240 Corridors (Source: GE DigitalGlobe 2011).

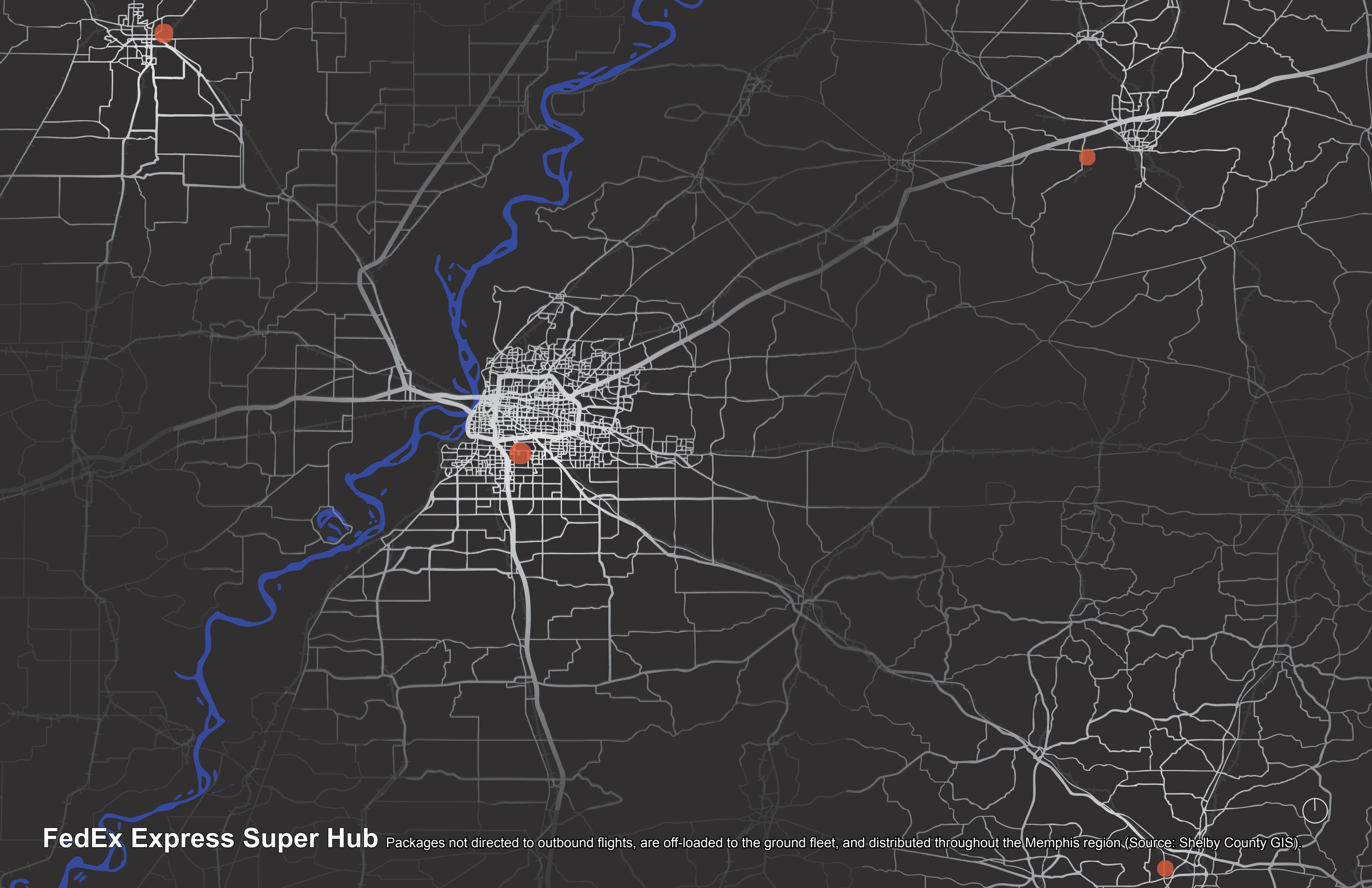


Lat. 35° 03' 17.91"N Long. 89° 57' 57.06"
Alt. 2.9 Km



FedEx Express Super Hub Aerial view of the largest logistics hub in the world, adjacent to the Memphis International Airport (Source: GE DigitalGlobe 2011).





FedEx Express Super Hub Packages not directed to outbound flights, are off-loaded to the ground fleet, and distributed throughout the Memphis region. (Source: Shelby County GIS).

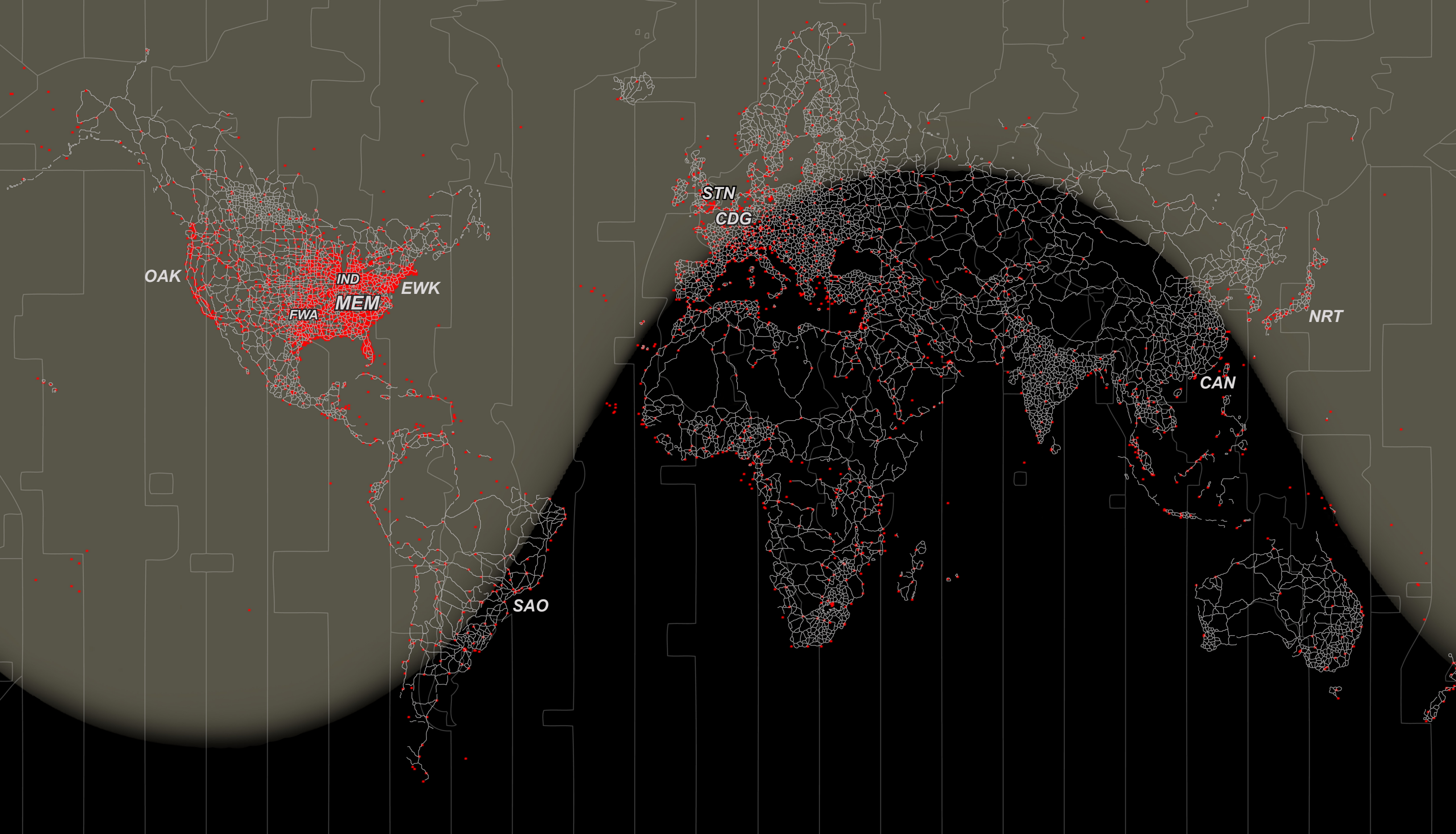




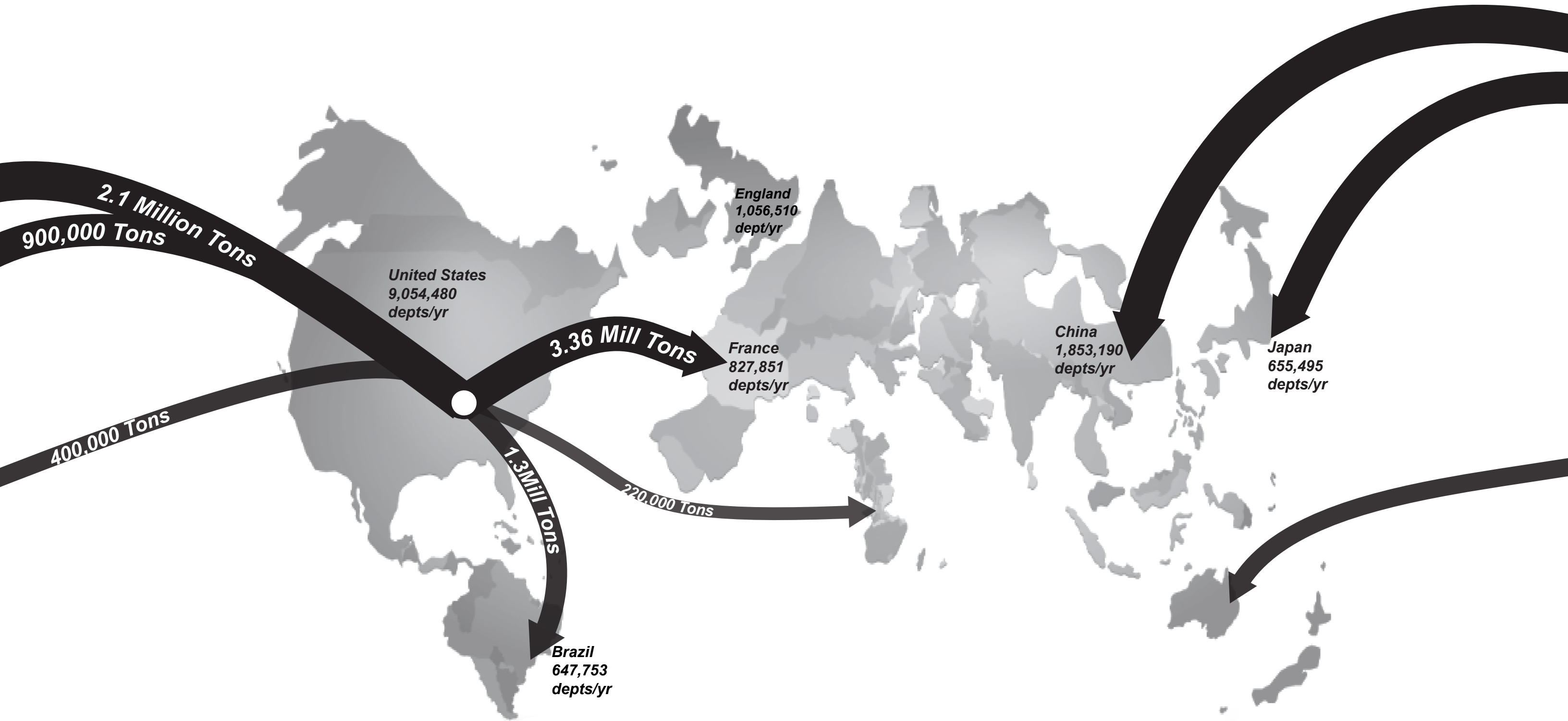
FedEx Express Super Hub Aerial Diagram of Memphis International Airport (Source: Shelby County GIS).



6 7am 8am 9am 10am 11am 12pm 1pm 2pm 3pm 4pm 5pm 6pm 7pm 8pm 9pm 10pm 11pm 12am 1am 2am 3am 4am 5am 6



FedEx Sorting Facilities Network from its headquarters in Memphis TN, FedEx has universal connectivity to its five international sorting hubs (Source: FedEx.com 2011).



FedEx's World

produced by FedEx, this map proportions the globe in terms of annual int'l flight departures per country and shows it with FedEx's largest routes by vol (Source: experience.fedex.com).