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**THE TOP
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**The
Aviator**
James Cooling
keeps the country's top
execs flying high

FLY GUY

It's only fitting that James Cooling is near impossible to get in touch with. He's always flying off somewhere. We profiled the aviator in 2005—he's a certified pilot with his own aircraft—and learned about his lifelong love of flying, and his business. "We continue to represent major U.S. and international corporations with the legal aspects of their aviation and corporate jet aircraft transactions," Cooling says today. "There are a number of new international business jets that are in the \$60 million-plus price range, the Gulfstream G650 and the Bombardier Global 7000. [The 2005 story] did a good job of describing what we do. ... Now, everything is more expensive and more international." The perks of having your own craft? Lots of travel. "I have made numerous client trips to Europe, China and the Middle East and have entertained clients from New Zealand in our offices in Kansas City," he says. "I am speaking on aircraft import/export issues at an international aviation symposium in March. When the U.S. economy and aviation market was down during the great recession, China, India and the Middle East became strong markets for U.S. aircraft."

Even social networking is heightened by flying. "My Facebook picture is me on a camel outside of Dubai," he says. Sound fun? So does hobnobbing with the stars of aviation, which Cooling did in January 2011 at the invite-only Living Legends of Aviation gala in Hollywood. Harrison Ford ("And Calista!" Cooling notes), Tom Cruise and John Travolta were on hand, and Cooling even got to walk the red carpet. Although Cooling was happy to speak with us, he did lament one fact. "Right now, we've got 14 inches of snow, 40 mph winds and our offices and the Kansas City Airport are both closed," he says. "The mayor declared a state of emergency." Talk about a no-fly zone.

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