

The history of the Columbus Regional Airport Authority is a story about two entities coming together to deliver superior aviation services for Central Ohio.

The Rickenbacker Port Authority was formed in 1979 to redevelop land the military released from the closure of the Rickenbacker Air Force Base and in 1990 took over the operations of the airport. The following year the operation of Port Columbus International Airport and Bolton Field Airport was transferred from the City of Columbus to the Columbus Airport Authority to provide greater latitude and more focused attention to the business of aviation.

In 2003 the Columbus Airport Authority and the Rickenbacker Port Authority were merged to create the Columbus Regional Airport Authority to provide for the strategic operation and development of Port Columbus, Rickenbacker and Bolton Field airports. In 2016, John Glenn's pioneering spirit inspired a renaming of Port Columbus International Airport to John Glenn Columbus International Airport.

John Glenn Columbus International Airport & Bolton Field Milestones

Since its opening in 1929, John Glenn Columbus International Airport has been on the cutting edge of the air transportation industry. Follow our journey step by step, as we evolved from humble beginnings to become one of the premier airports in the Midwest.

1929

Port Columbus opens as a stop on the first transcontinental air/rail service from New York to the West coast.

At 7:35 a.m. on July 8, 1929, thousands of spectators watch as passengers arrive at the Columbus railroad station across from the Fifth Avenue, Port Columbus terminal where two Ford Tri-Motor aircraft await the inaugural flight. By 8:17 a.m. 19 passengers, including famed aviatrix Amelia Earhart, are airborne aboard two Ford Tri-Motor aircraft destined for Oklahoma, the next stop in the transcontinental trip operated by Transcontinental Air Transport. Average price for a one-way ticket: \$351.94.



Reaching up to 50 miles, a high-intensity beacon light, reportedly the first of its kind in the U.S., sits atop the Port Columbus tower and flashes the initials "PC" in Morse Code to pinpoint the airport's location.

1930

With the advent of instruments for night flying, the train-plane operation is greatly reduced with the introduction of all air coast-to-coast service made possible by the merged company of Transcontinental Air Transport and Western Air, Inc. (TWA). For a number of years, the Port Columbus railroad station is used by airline passengers stranded by bad weather.

Over 11,000 people travel through Port Columbus in its first full year of operation.

1936

In the midst of the Great Depression, nearly 40,000 men labor for the Public Works Administration on airport projects in 42 states. At Port Columbus these men build an east-west runway.

1939

A total of 15 scheduled flights leave Port Columbus every day. Meanwhile, the world is on the brink of World War II.

1940

As one of only 31 non-military fields in the U.S. capable of handling the era's military aircraft, in October Curtiss-Wright Corporation leases 83 acres of airport property on behalf of the government and produces planes that make the first attack on Rabaul during World War II. About 6,000 aircraft will be produced at the Curtis-Wright facility during the war.



1941

To further war efforts, the federal government assumes operation of Port Columbus and the Civil Aeronautics Authority appropriates \$1.5 million to make airport improvements, including lengthening the runways.

1942

The federal government takes over operation of the Curtiss-Wright plant in May and establishes a Naval Air Facility at Port Columbus.

1944

Port Columbus shows a profit for the first time: \$4,329.10.

1945

World War II ends.

1946

The U.S. Navy relinquishes control of Port Columbus in March and Mayor James A. Rhodes forms a metropolitan airport commission headed by John P. Biehn with Francis A. "Jack" Bolton as Superintendent. Bolton, fresh out of the Navy, was the youngest, large-city airport manager in the country at the age of 26.

1950

North Korea invades South Korea, starting the Korean War. North American Aviation leases the former Curtiss-Wright plant at Port Columbus and employs 18,000. The U.S. remains involved until the war ends in mid-1953.

1952

Larger airplanes are able to land at Port Columbus after the east-west runway, today known as the south runway, was extended from 4,500 to 8,000 feet with parallel taxiways.

1953

To be better positioned for future growth, the decision was made to move Port Columbus operations from the original Fifth Avenue terminal to a site more centrally located on airport property. In preparation for this move, construction begins on a new 10-story control tower located in the middle of airport property. This control tower operates for 50 years until a new tower opens in 2004.



1954

The Navy's Blue Angels and the Air Force's thunderbirds performs at a July air show celebrating Port Columbus' 25th anniversary

1958

An estimated 130,000 people attend celebration and dedication activities September 21 for Port Columbus' \$12 million upgrade including a new terminal building. At this time, Port Columbus ranks as the nation's 16th busiest airport.



1961

Trans World Airlines inaugurates the first full jet service at Port Columbus in September utilizing Convair 880 aircraft.

1964

Beginning and ending her historic flight at Port Columbus, on April 17 Bexley housewife Jerrie Mock completes in 29.5 days the first round-the-world solo flight by a woman.

1965

Following the establishment of a U.S. Customs facility, the airport becomes known as Port Columbus International Airport.

1970

Long-time Port Columbus Superintendent Francis "Jack" Bolton was honored posthumously October 24 when the City dedicates Bolton Field Airport in southwest Columbus. Bolton Field was constructed to handle general aviation, such as personal aircraft and business aviation, allowing Port Columbus to focus on commercial traffic.



1972

Continental Airlines lands the first scheduled 747 at Port Columbus in December to transport The Ohio State University marching band to Los Angeles for the Rose Bowl. This was not the first 747 to grace the Port Columbus runways. A TWA Boeing 747 touched down in March 1970 during a training flight from New York.

1978

On January 26 volumes of snow and ferocious winds during the blizzard of '78 damage several Port Columbus and Bolton Field buildings. Though Port Columbus remains open, only one Florida-bound Eastern Airlines flight departs. All others are cancelled.



1979

Port Columbus celebrates its 50th anniversary and the original terminal building is added to the National Register of Historic Places. Approximately 2.5 million passengers annually pass through Port Columbus, which becomes a “model of passenger convenience” following a \$70 million airport renovation, including enclosed jetways at every gate.

1982

Bolton Field establishes a niche by hosting local air shows, and on October 16 Astronaut and Senator John Glenn serves as honorary chairman of an air show benefiting the League Against Child Abuse. As is common with these events the show includes skydivers, aerobatics, wingwalkers and more.

1989

In July the City renames 17th Avenue to International Gateway, which leads to the front door of Port Columbus International Airport. Later this same year, the 60th year of airport operation, a new 7-gate \$15.5 million concourse built by US Airways opens. This area eventually becomes known as Concourse A.

1991

To provide greater latitude and more focused attention to the business of aviation, the oversight of Port Columbus and Bolton Field transfer from the City of Columbus to the independent Columbus Municipal Airport Authority.

1996

Concourse C opens at Port Columbus with four gates to be used by Delta and Southwest airlines.

1997

Completion of the \$20 million north runway extension from 6,000 feet to 8,000 feet increases the airport's capacity for aircraft operations.

1998

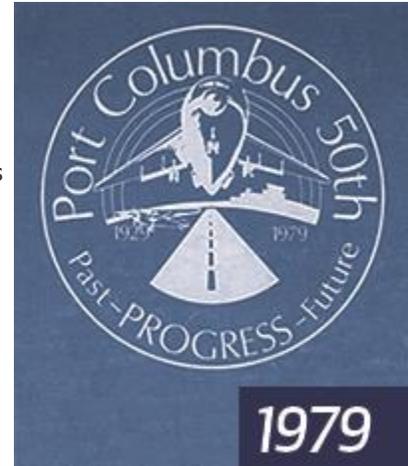
A \$25 million terminal renovation project produces new food court, retail shops, flight information displays, enhanced lighting, upgraded flooring and courtesy phones.

2000

The largest Port Columbus capital project to date is completed in February. The \$92 million project includes a new six-level parking garage, extensive car rental and roadway improvements in addition to a stunning atrium.

2001

On September 11, Port Columbus becomes a haven for numerous airlines and aircraft as America's skies become no-fly zones as a result of the day's terrorist attacks in New York City and our nation's capital. More intensive passenger screenings begin followed soon thereafter by the setup of new security checkpoints and baggage screening operations staffed by the newly created Transportation Security Administration.



2002

The Bolton Field Master Plan Update is completed in November, identifying ways the airport can play a larger role in the local aviation system. Timely, phased development and additional services beneficial to the general aviation community will be key to the airport's growth.

2003

In late 2002, the City of Columbus, Franklin County and the Columbus Airport Authority approve the merger of the Columbus Airport Authority and Rickenbacker Port Authority, forming the new Columbus Regional Airport Authority effective January 1, 2003.



2004

A new Airport Traffic Control Tower is operational in April at Port Columbus. The 221-foot tall, 20-story tower is strategically positioned to provide for future expansion of Port Columbus International Airport.

In July, Port Columbus celebrates its 75th anniversary and subsequently records 6.2 million total passengers for the year. The airport's significance as an economic catalyst is documented through an independent study revealing that Port Columbus contributes 23,520 jobs, \$624.8 million payroll, and \$2.2 billion to the annual economy. The entire Columbus Regional Airport Authority and its three airports – Port Columbus, Rickenbacker and Bolton Field – combine to account for nearly 30,000 jobs, \$793.1 million payroll, and \$2.7 billion in annual economic activity.

Note – study conducted in 2005 reported on 2004 stats

2008

A realigned International Gateway opens in May, facilitating access from Interstate 670 to airport parking and the terminal. Passing under a new aircraft crossover taxiway which opened months earlier, the roadway project includes a new cell phone waiting lot. The realignment is one of several major projects that the Airport Authority will undertake over the next several years to position Port Columbus for future growth.



2009

Completion of the I670/Stelzer Road overpass provides even quicker and easier access to Port Columbus by eliminating traffic lights at the former intersection of Stelzer and International Gateway.

The airport celebrates 50 years of passenger service by Delta Air Lines and United Airlines. Combined, the two air carriers fly about 25 percent of all Port Columbus passengers.



2011

American Airlines and Port Columbus commemorate an 80-year partnership of providing high quality air service to central Ohio. The airline is the airport's fourth largest with 12 percent of the market share.

Port Columbus reinforces its position as a cornerstone of the Columbus region economy according to an independent economic impact study. The airport contributes 33,464 total jobs, \$1.1 billion total payroll and \$3.7 billion total economic output. Factored with Rickenbacker and Bolton Field airports, the entire Columbus Regional Airport Authority accounts for 38,374 total jobs, \$1.3 billion in total payroll and \$4.6 billion in total output.



The first of two inline baggage systems becomes operational in November, accelerating the passenger check-in process and enhancing baggage screening capabilities by the Transportation Security Administration. The new automated system relocates the massive luggage scanning process from in front of the ticket counters to an area behind the scenes, reducing congestion in the ticket lobby.

2012

The second inline baggage system comes online in January with all airlines now being served by the efficient, automated baggage handling process. In the spring, the large baggage screening equipment exits the terminal, restoring the spaciousness to Port Columbus' ticket lobby.

2013

Federal Aviation Administrator Michael P. Huerta commissions Port Columbus' new \$140 million South Runway at an August 22 event commemorating the largest capital project in the airport's 85-year history. Funded jointly by the FAA and the Airport Authority, the relocated runway creates sufficient distance from the north runway to accommodate simultaneous aircraft arrivals and departures.



Moving the runway also creates more airfield space for a second terminal to be built when passenger growth demands. The old south runway is being converted into a taxiway and is scheduled for completion in 2014.

In September, Port Columbus completes renovation of Concourse A, the first phase of an \$80 million Terminal Modernization Program designed to upgrade the 1958 terminal to improve the airport experience for passengers and ensure the efficient handling of millions of travelers, until increased demand requires the building of a new terminal. Work will continue through 2016.



2014

In a milestone year when Port Columbus observes 85 years of connecting Ohio with the world, the airport completes Concourse C renovations, the second of five terminal modernization phases. Work commences on Concourse B and the Ticket Lobby. The \$80 million program is on track for an early 2016 completion.

Conversion of Port Columbus' former south runway into a taxiway is also finalized. Completion of this final phase of the South Runway project represents the culmination of \$700 million in airport infrastructure improvements over a 12-year timeframe.

Fairfield Inn & Suites, a high quality Marriott brand hotel, opens in August adjacent to the Port Columbus terminal. Owned by the Columbus Regional Airport Authority and operated by a third party, the \$12.6 million hotel provides another convenient accommodation choice for airport passengers and visitors to the



Columbus region. Installation of a digital wall on the hotel exterior enhances the value of this new non-airline revenue source for Port Columbus.

These Port Columbus investments exemplify successes experienced as a result of the Airport Authority's strategic planning and outstanding financial stewardship, factors recognized by the Government Finance Officers Association for Excellence which awarded the Airport Authority with its 22nd consecutive Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting – the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting. The award reinforces the organization's well-known reputation in the aviation industry for open communication, operational excellence and prudent financial management.



2015

In an era of airline mergers, six major carriers now serve Port Columbus business and leisure passengers: Air Canada Express, American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, Southwest Airlines, United, and US Airways, which is in the process of merging with American. Vacation Express, a 22-year-old tour operator, also offers nonstop flights. Additionally, from Rickenbacker Charter Terminal, Allegiant Airlines provides scheduled, nonstop passenger service to many popular vacation destinations.



2016

Driven by a pursuit to accomplish the seemingly impossible, Ohio native John Glenn became the first American to orbit the Earth in 1962. After decades of service as a U.S. senator, at the age of 77 he became the oldest person to enter space. Glenn's pioneering spirit inspired a renaming of Port Columbus International Airport in 2016 to John Glenn Columbus International Airport.

Rickenbacker International Airport Milestones

The international logistics hub known as the Rickenbacker Inland Port is the result of a strategic initiative launched to redevelop the former Rickenbacker Air Force Base.

1941-1949

On December 8, 1941, the day after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the Army announced that a \$7.5 million airbase would be built just east of the Village of Lockbourne. The Lockbourne Army Air Base opened in June 1942 as a glider and B-17 training facility.

After the war the base was used as a development and testing facility for all-weather military flight operations. The primary unit at the base was the all-Black 447th Composite Group, also known as the Tuskegee Airmen. This unit merged with the 477th Composite Group in 1947, becoming the 332nd Fighter wing, one of the first all-Black flying units in the newly created United States Air Force. In June 1949, the 332nd was reassigned, the base was deactivated and control transferred to the Ohio Air National Guard. For the next 18 months, the Air National Guard used the base for training.



1950 - 1959

With the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, the base was reactivated as Lockbourne Air Force Base in January 1951 and placed under the control of the Strategic Air Command. Throughout the 1950s, the Strategic Air Command used the base as a training facility and stationed aircraft on full-time alert duty for national defense.

In 1955 major construction is completed at Lockbourne Air Force Base that nearly doubles the land area and includes the addition of a second, longer runway; several large hangars; and a permanent air traffic control tower, which remained in use for 60 years.

1960 - 1969

The base population grew further during the Vietnam War years of 1964-72, reaching an all-time peak of more than 18,000 service people in 1967.

1970 - 1979

In 1974 the base was renamed Rickenbacker Air Force Base in honor of World War I flying ace and Congressional Medal of Honor recipient Eddie Rickenbacker, a Columbus native.

With the cessation of hostilities in Vietnam and the ending of the military draft, the number of Armed Forces personnel declined sharply, resulting in downsizing and closures of military bases around the country. In April 1978 the Air Force announced plans to transfer Strategic Air Command functions elsewhere, leading to the eventual loss of 12,000 jobs.

1980 - 1990

In April 1980, Rickenbacker Air Force Base officially closed and the facility was turned over to the Ohio Air National Guard and renamed Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base.

Two months later Franklin County Commissioners activated the Rickenbacker Port Authority, which entered into a joint-use agreement with the Air Force to share responsibility for operating the airport. The Authority's mission also included receiving and redeveloping airport land released for civilian use, with the idea that the property would be a good location for an industrial site.

1991-2001

Throughout the 1990s Rickenbacker developed into an international logistics hub starting with Spiegel/Eddie Bauer and Siemens locating in the area in 1992. A few years later U.S. Customs relocated their offices to Rickenbacker.

2003

In late 2002, the City of Columbus, Franklin County and the Columbus Airport Authority approved the merger of the Columbus Airport Authority and Rickenbacker Port Authority, forming the new Columbus Regional Airport Authority effective January 1, 2003.

On July 12 the Rickenbacker Charter Terminal opened with Southeast Airlines providing the first passenger charter service at Rickenbacker International Airport. The first flight, #777, flew to Las Vegas.

2007

Rickenbacker International Airport celebrated 65 years of rich aviation history and hosted the Gathering of Mustangs & Legends, a once-in-a-lifetime aviation event that shared the history of the P-51 Mustang aircraft and honored the heroes of World War II. The four-



day event attracted more than 150,000 guests from around the world and allowed the Columbus Regional Airport Authority to highlight the history of Rickenbacker, including the contributions of the Tuskegee Airmen.

2008

The Columbus Regional Airport Authority collaborated with Norfolk Southern Corporation to build and open the Rickenbacker Intermodal Terminal adjacent to Rickenbacker International Airport.

The \$68.5 million terminal is situated in the Rickenbacker Global Logistics Park, one of the largest integrated logistics complexes in the U.S., enabling Norfolk Southern to significantly expand its intermodal business in Central Ohio.

2010

The Heartland Corridor opened, thereby significantly increasing the speed of containerized freight moving in double-stack trains between the East Coast and the Midwest. The Heartland Corridor goes across Virginia, through southern West Virginia and north through the Rickenbacker Intermodal Terminal to Chicago.

Considering Rickenbacker's existence as a low-cost, high-speed multimodal logistics hub with access to customers throughout North America, the term "Rickenbacker Inland Port" emerges as an overarching brand name for Rickenbacker. Thousands are employed by prominent companies in the area's warehouse and distribution centers. At the heart of the evolving inland port is Rickenbacker International Airport, one of the few cargo-dedicated airports in the world. Foreign Trade-Zone #138, the Rickenbacker Charter Terminal and the Rickenbacker Global Logistics Park comprise the modern, global gateway.

2012

Record-setting volumes of goods passed through Rickenbacker's Foreign-Trade Zone #138 - \$2.75 billion in goods to be exact, 20 percent more than the last record set in 2010. International goods most commonly admitted to FTZ #138 include pharmaceuticals and textiles such as clothing and footwear.

In early March a three-mile stretch of Rickenbacker Parkway opened to accommodate four lanes of traffic and provide a more efficient route for moving freight to and from nearby Norfolk Southern Rickenbacker Intermodal Facility, improving the flow of truck traffic surrounding Rickenbacker International Airport. The project was a joint effort of the Columbus Regional Airport Authority, Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, the Ohio Department of Transportation and the city of Columbus.

Allegiant Air, a low-cost air carrier entered the Columbus passenger service market in early November providing direct flights from Rickenbacker Charter Terminal to Orlando-Sanford International Airport. Allegiant is the first scheduled carrier to operate from the airport.

2013

Cargolux Airlines International S.A. initiated the first scheduled air cargo service from Rickenbacker June 16. Operating twice-weekly flights from Hong Kong to Columbus on advanced 747-8 freighters, making it easier for the region's fashion and apparel companies to reliably reach global markets. Cargolux became the sixth cargo airline to operate from Rickenbacker, joining FedEx, UPS, Kalitta Air, Evergreen, Atlas Air and AirNet.

In late November Allegiant Air added year-round, nonstop service from Rickenbacker Charter Terminal to St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport and announced plans to begin service to Punta Gorda, Florida in the spring of 2014.

Rickenbacker Aviation was formed by the Columbus Regional Airport Authority to operate as the airport's primary Fixed Base Operator. Bringing the FBO operations completely in-house increased Rickenbacker's revenue stream for these airport services.