



OPINION PIECE:

New airport will serve central Indiana's aviation needs for many years

The past two years have been among the most pivotal in the Indianapolis Airport Authority's 47-year history.

In 2007, the city's 10-year public-private partnership with BAA Indianapolis LLC ended and the authority once again took the reins of daily operations at Indianapolis International Airport (IND) and its five general aviation facilities.

At the same time, the landmark Midfield Project—with its massive transition of moving people and operations from the old to new airports—was well underway.

So when it opened at 8 p.m. on Nov. 11, 2008 and continued through its first 24 hours of operation what was, in some respects, most remarkable about the new airport is what didn't happen. No flights were cancelled. No passengers were stranded. No bags were lost. The airport's systems functioned smoothly, reliably, and well.

When Terminal 5 at Heathrow Airport opened in March of 2008, the experience was different. Before the 24-hour mark, the BBC and major UK newspapers reported dozens of flights were delayed. Over the next 72 hours, more than 300 flights were cancelled. The baggage handling operation ground to a halt. More than 15,000 bags were stranded.

But besides the smooth opening of a \$1.066 billion new airport with no embarrassing glitches, what did central Indiana gain?

Based on my 25 years of experience and visits to some of the world's best airports, I believe we have an outstanding asset whose infrastructure will serve the flying public well for several generations. Specifically, the new airport:

1. **Replaces a landlocked, aging terminal with under-sized parking facilities.** With no major expansion or improvements, Indianapolis International will meet passenger and cargo demands for the next 50 years.
2. **Reduces taxi times and fuel consumption.** For round-trip flights, passengers will spend 16 fewer minutes traveling between the runways and terminal. Less distance to the runways saves about \$4,000 in fuel costs per flight. As a result, airlines serving Indianapolis will save nearly \$1 million annually in fuel costs.
3. **Moves people and baggage efficiently.** Passengers easily move through the ticketing hall and Civic Plaza into spacious, convenient security checkpoints with less wait time than at

the old terminal. Front- and back-of-house systems manage more baggage more quickly.

4. **Has excellent roadway access that moves traffic quickly and efficiently.** The I-70 interchange provides quick, easy access to parking and the terminal. Minutes from major interstates and highways, IND is logistically convenient passengers and business travelers across central Indiana.
5. **Includes cost-competitive, spacious garage parking for customers and rental car agencies,** Despite recent increases, garage parking is still less than at the old airport. Renting and returning cars is more convenient and consumes less fuel, which also helps keep costs low.
6. **Is well-maintained and visually pleasing.** Featuring native Midwestern plants and grasses, the landscaping reflects Indiana's natural environment. Inside, the terminal celebrates the state's Midwestern roots with \$4 million in unique, colorful original art that speaks to travelers of all ages.

All in all, I believe we have accomplished a great deal in our first year of operation.

But we remain an organization in transition, moving away from a focus on capital construction to an emphasis on efficiency, excellence in customer service, and growth to become the Midwest's airport system of choice.

As we look toward the next year and beyond, I hope you'll join us on our journey.



John D. Clark, III
Executive director & CEO