

## History Of The Dane County Regional Airport

### 1920's: Madison's first airport

- Barnstormer Howard Morey of Chicago, Edgar Quinn and J.J. McMannamy organized the Madison Airways Corporation. Located near highways 12 and 18 on the south shore of Lake Monona, Madison's first airport was born.
- In 1927, the Royal Rapid Transit Company (RRTC) purchased the Madison Airways Corporation. The airport was quickly renamed the Royal Airport and the Royal Airways Corporation (RAC).
- RRTC provided Madison with the first cabin airplane (which sat five passengers) and the first airline to provide daily service to Chicago.
- In 1927, the City of Madison purchased 290 acres of land for \$35,380. Previously a cabbage patch for a nearby sauerkraut factory, the newly acquired land would later become the present day home of the Dane County Regional Airport.
- In 1928, RRTC discontinued service to Chicago and liquidated its assets.

### 1930's: Madison's first airplane manufacturing plant

- Madison welcomes the first airplane manufacturing plant – the Corben Sport Plane Company. Corben designed and produced his semi-built "Super Ace" kits, which included converted Ford Model A motors. In 1934, Corben left Madison amid bankruptcy.
- Wisconsin artist Cal Peters, in 1936, painted a Depression Era mural of his vision of what the Madison Municipal Airport would be. The mural depicted a terminal building along Highway 51, and two crosswind runways. The restored mural is displayed in the Greeter's lounge in the center of the main terminal.
- In January of 1936, the city council voted to accept a WPA grant for construction of four runways and an airplane hangar. Additional grants financed the terminal and administrative building as well as electric floodlights. The development price tag was \$1,000,000 – 10% paid by the city and remainder by the federal government.

### City of Madison opens the first passenger airport

- Madison Municipal Airport, as it was known then, was completed on the east side of the Airfield and opened with Morey as manager on March 9, 1939.
- Northwest Airlines, now Delta Air Lines, has served passengers in Dane County regularly since the first terminal was built in 1938.
- The east side terminal location is now the site of Wisconsin Aviation.
- In 1939, Howard Morey opened the first U.S. government funded, Civilian Pilot Training Program.

### 1940's: Airport known as Truax Field

- In 1942, operation of the airfield was also transferred to the US Army Air Corps. The airfield was renamed Truax Field, in honor of Madisonian Lt. Thomas L. Truax, who died in a training flight shortly before the attack on Pearl Harbor.
- The Corps expanded the airfield to 2,140 acres and rebuilt the four runways.
- Following the conclusion of WWII, the US Army Air Corp was deactivated and the field was returned to the city under the Surplus Properties Act – with a recapture clause for national emergencies.
- In 1946, Wisconsin Central Airlines, predecessor of North Central Airlines (now Republic Airlines), established its home office in Madison.
- In 1947, Robert Skuldt was named airport manager, a position that he would hold until 1981.
- In 1948, the Wisconsin Air National Guard was established and stationed in Madison.

**1950's: Commercial aircraft service in Madison**

- DC-3 airplanes were the first commercial aircraft (North Central Airlines) to serve Madison in the 1950s.
- Following the start of the Korean War, the U.S. government enforced its recapture clause in 1951 – activating the Wisconsin Air National Guard.
- Wisconsin Central Airlines relocated its home office to Minneapolis in early 1952.

**1960's: A new terminal emerges**

- In 1962, the city completed a long-range master plan – paving the way for a grant from the Federal Aid to Airports Program – a new terminal and taxiway system was designed.
- A modern 31,000 square foot terminal building was built across the airfield on the west side – which was eight-times larger than the original east side terminal.
- The cost of the new terminal was \$2.36 million – it opened on December 15, 1966.
- At the time, Dane County's population was 250,000 and annual airport passengers totaled 310,000 with 68 daily flights.
- Also in 1966, the Air Force drastically reduced its station at Truax.
- By 1968, the US Air Force was completely phased out at Truax field, leaving the Wisconsin Air National Guard to perform alert/interceptor mission exclusively – 770 acres of land and many buildings were deeded to the city.

**1970's: The Madison Municipal Airport transitioned to the Dane County Regional Airport**

- In 1970, a \$1.9 million airport improvement plan was approved for the reconstruction and expansion of the airports existing runways. Construction began in 1972.
- In 1972, the City-owned airport was subsidized \$650,000 per year by county tax dollars.
- In August of 1973, the City Council backed a transfer to the County, approved by the County Board in June 1974.
- Mayor Paul Soglin and County Executive George Reinke signed the transfer agreement on June 30, 1974 and at 12:01 the following morning, on July 1, the Dane County Regional Airport came into being.
- In 1974, the airport had over 500,000 passengers per year and jet service was introduced to Madison by Northwest Orient Airlines.

**1980's: Airport on a Roll**

- In 1982, the airport became a self-sustaining enterprise and paid back all debt services with no property tax support.
- In 1986, the airport tripled in size with a \$12 million project that expanded the terminal from 32,000 square feet to 90,000 square feet, adding a second level concourse with six boarding bridges.

**1990's: Commuter terminal and multi-level parking addition**

- In 1990, the airport served over 1 million passengers. In the same year, the FAA completed a Part 150 noise compatibility study.
- In 1991, a \$3.8 million expansion added a 50-foot high glass atrium and a commuter gate – expanding the terminal to over 125,000 square feet.
- The Corben Super Ace aircraft became a fixture in the DCRA terminal when it was hung in the glass atrium as a moniker of DCRA in 1991. The exact replica was donated by a local EAA chapter.
- A multi-level parking structure was built in 1993, with an additional level added in 1998.
- To further reduce the impact of noise, construction began for a \$24.5 million runway – named 3/21 – it was the first new runway since 1942 – the runway opened in 1998.
- In 1999 the design for the new terminal building was completed.

**2000's: New Prairie Style Gateway to Our Community**

- In 2000, runway 18/36 was reconstructed and new runway shoulders were added.
- In 2001, a groundbreaking ceremony initiated a 5-year, \$68 million building project that doubled the size of the terminal to 274,000 square feet – the project remained on budget and on schedule. This project designed to replicate the signature Frank Lloyd Wright, prairie style architecture– which features an elegant appearance with accents of cherry wood, polished granite and spun aluminum.
- In 2002, the International Lane entrance drive was relocated and 250 parking stalls are added to the surface parking lot.
- Also in 2002, Wisconsin Aviation completed its new general aviation terminal.
- On June 21, 2006, a terminal dedication was held heralding a new era - A History of Progress -- A Future of Promise.
- In 2006, Robert Skuldt was inducted into the Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame.
- In 2010, a new glycol management system was installed to collect and treat airplane-deicing runoff. The system replaced an existing glycol retention pond.
- Today, DCRA covers nearly 3,000 acres and serves over 1.5 million passengers.
- In November of 2008 an additional parking structure addition was completed.

1. Restaurants, Shops and Rental Car outlets
  - Local restaurants like The Great Dane and Ancora Coffee Roasters are joined by popular franchises including: Quizno's Subs, Uno Pizza and Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream. SSP America manages our great selection of airport restaurants.
  - The Wisconsin Marketplace, Lake Country Travel Mart and CNBC News sell many Wisconsin products including: Wisconsin cheese (the best seller), Badger and Packer merchandise and cheesehead items. Our retail shops are managed by The Paradies Shops, which operates over 400 stores in over 60 airports and hotels across the United States and Canada.
2. Greater Madison Convention & Visitors Bureau Booth
  - Greeters welcome visitors to Madison and share information about the area.
3. The Robert B. Skuldt Conference Room
  - This executive conference room is used by the Airport Commission and is available for public usage as well.
  - Additional conference and training rooms at the north end of the terminal are also available.
4. The Art Court
  - Open to the general public.
  - Located at the center of the main terminal across from the ticket counters.
  - Family friendly environment.
  - Introduction to local culture.
  - Rotating local, regional and national exhibits.
5. Green Building Information:
  - The terminal expansion project incorporated 25 green building strategies.
  - The chiller plant works at night during low electrical power demand to store ice that is used to cool the building during the daytime.
  - Carpet and ceiling tiles are from recycled materials
  - Chlorine-free vinyl wall coverings
  - 98% (40,000 tons) of construction debris recycled
  - The aqua blue wall sconces were made from recycled soda bottles
  - Glycol management system to collect, store and dispose of storm water that could contain deicing agents.
6. Airlines currently serving Dane County Regional Airport:
  - American Eagle, Continental Express, Delta Air Lines, Frontier Airlines, and United Express.
7. DCRA Economic Impact Information:
  - Dane County Regional Airport is an economic engine and a global gateway
  - A critical link to talent, investment and destinations throughout the world
  - Visitors to and from the University of Wisconsin and our arts centers enrich the learning and cultural environment
  - The nonstop flights help businesses here recruit the best and brightest talent and venture capital from around the country
  - 100 commercial flights depart and arrive at the airport on an average day.
  - Starting a trip in Dane County can take you anywhere in the world – with many direct flights to large hub cities – DCRA makes a trip anywhere in the world easy and efficient.