

METROPOLITAN Airport News™

JUNE 2024

The Journal of the Metropolitan New York Airport Community

Creating a Northstar

Steve Thody, CEO JFK Millennium Partners & the Terminal 6 Team



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Welcome to the June issue of the *Metropolitan Airport News*. The airports are buzzing with the leadup to the summer travel season. The projections are outstanding, and TSA anticipates the busiest travel season on record this year. Be prepared and be patient as you work at the airports or travel through them over the next few months. Construction continues to be challenging due to diverted roadways and ever-changing traffic patterns. Consider the significant benefits of signing up with TSA Pre-Check; it can save you time and stress, especially during this busy season. Parking spaces are not readily available, so allow yourself more time, definitely pre-book parking, use the Airtrain or take a car service. As you're talking to friends about their travel plans this summer, let them know what to expect. Preparedness will help set expectations and hopefully make things go much smoother.

I hope you enjoy this issue, which features **Steve Thody** from JFK Millennium Partners. His story is an excellent read because it demonstrates that taking risks, positioning yourself within a corporate setting, and knowing who you are and your strengths will allow you to be present for the next great opportunity. In fact, **Jerry Spampinato's** AOA Reflections article has that same message.

Sometimes, we get so caught up with the day in and day out that we don't look at the larger picture. What can you step up for? What contribution can you make to the team that will make a difference and position you for the next step in your career path? It's career advancement at its best when you are driving it with your talent and perseverance. When that effort is met with a great management team, you are all winners in delivering an outstanding experience for the clients, passengers, and stakeholders.

This summer is gearing up to be busy for the folks working at and traveling through airports. Fantastic events are planned for the airport community. Take a look at our calendar for the most up-to-date details.

We hope you can join us at the **Airport Community Golf Classic** next month for the networking and cocktail party. We expect to have more than 300 airport professionals in attendance for a casual evening of great food and great company.

I hope you are enjoying the prelude to summer, and I'll see you around the airport!

Katie Bliss

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ON THE COVER

During this month's featured article photo shoot, the new Terminal 6 CEO, Steve Thody, and the JFK Millennium Partners team members gave the Metropolitan Airport News editorial staff a behind-the-scenes tour of the new terminal's ongoing construction.

(Photo by Beverly Holder)

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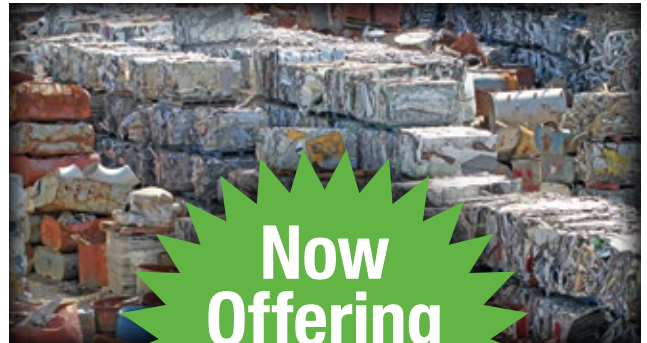
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FAST FIVE

“Fast Five” is a succinct Q&A examining topical airport subjects of importance to the interviewee.



Rishali Chaplot

Manager, Environment & Sustainability at the New Terminal 6

Rishali Chaplot is Manager, Environment and Sustainability, where she is responsible for leading all environmental and sustainability programs and best management practices for JFK Millennium Partners at JFK Airport. She ensures the organization’s compliance with federal, state, city and Port Authority laws, regulations, permits, policies, and guidance for JFK Terminal 6 and 7. In her previous roles, she created and led sustainability strategies with a focus on climate change, responsible sourcing, and supply chain mapping. She has completed a Masters in Consumer Merchandising and Bachelors in Chemical Technology.

1 What is your role as JFK Millennium Partners’ (JMP), Manager, Environment & Sustainability at the new Terminal 6?

In my current role, I lead all environmental and sustainability programs, including best management practices and guidelines for JFK Millennium Partners at JFK Terminals 6 and 7. As part of my role, I ensure compliance with federal, state, city and Port Authority laws, regulations, permits and policies.

2 In leading the environmental and sustainability efforts at the redevelopment of Terminal 7, what are the challenges of making the oldest airport terminal at JFK International Airport more sustainable?

One of our biggest learnings while operating a 50+ year old facility is that the building design needs to be robust and dynamic to withstand the next few decades, but also adapt to the latest technologies and sustainability initiatives. We are now building a terminal (T6) which is designed not only for LEED, ENVISION, and SITES certifications – but also has numerous sustainability features as part of its design. This includes, for example, rainwater harvesting, over 6,000 solar panels, electric ground handling equipment, and glycol (de-icing spray) capture and recycling during the winter, to name a few. All of this will help us in ensuring smooth, long-lasting terminal operations for years to come.

3 In looking to the future, what is the impact of sustainability efforts within the surrounding community and the environmental benefits?

All of our efforts are directed towards building a sustainable, resilient, and community-oriented terminal. The terminal is designed to ensure that its operation will not negatively impact the air, sound, and water quality in our local community, thereby supporting public health and safety. Our ENVISION certification, for example, will improve the quality of life in our community by providing access to essential services and economic opportunities while minimizing our impact on local ecosystems, biodiversity and natural resources.

4 How will recently introduced composting to reduce organic waste sent to landfills result in cost savings and align with broader sustainability objectives?

Composting has helped us divert a large percentage of the terminal waste from landfills to compost. While composting benefits the environment, it’s also great when this type of initiative can also generate cost savings – making it a win-win scenario. With more composting and less frequent trash collections, we’ve increased our cost savings per kg of waste overall and are really excited to implement this strategy at Terminal 6 – where we aim to achieve a substantial waste diversion rate.

5 What are a few of your past efforts in ensuring a green future, and up to this point in your career, is there one particular effort that you are most proud of?

In the past, I have worked in building sustainability strategies and developing initiatives such as generating renewable electricity through solar panels, mapping the product supply chain, and conducting product life cycle assessments to estimate the total carbon emissions of a product throughout its life cycle, thus helping to reduce a company’s carbon footprint. The effort I am most proud of was developing and publishing a company’s Science-Based-Target (SBT) carbon emission reduction goals. ■



EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

MWBE, Local Business and Community Milestones at JFK

This past April, Governor Hochul announced a historic milestone in the continuing transformation of JFK International Airport, where a record \$2.3 billion in contracts have been awarded to Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE). This represents the largest participation by MWBE firms in any Public-Private Project (P3) in the history of New York State. With the redevelopment of JFK and the construction of its newest facilities currently underway, MWBE participation at the Airport is expected to continue to break records until the project is set to reach completion in 2028.

The redevelopment project at Kennedy Airport also signals a consequential focus on working with local contractors, awarding over \$950 million in contracts to Queens-based businesses.

The Port Authority of NY & NJ continues to work closely with its private terminal developer partners, the New Terminal One (NTO), JFK Millennium Partners T6 & T7, Delta Air Lines and JFKIAT T4, and American Airlines, to engage MWBEs and local businesses in all aspects of the redevelopment program. As of last April, over 675 MWBEs and more than 200 Queens-based businesses had been awarded contracts at JFK.

Following the April announcement, JFK Millennium Partners' newly appointed CEO, **Steve Thody**, featured in this month's issue of *Metropolitan Airport News*, expressed his pride in the fact that

over 200 MWBEs and local businesses are currently involved in the new Terminal 6 project, with many more opportunities on the horizon. He said, "We are excited to play our part in providing social and economic opportunities for our surrounding community, and we look forward to the future with great optimism."

And coming up, featured in the July 2024 issue of *Metropolitan Airport News*, **Jennifer Aument**, the recently appointed CEO at the New Terminal One, said, "Our mission at the NTO at JFK Airport extends beyond building a world-class gateway to New York and our nation; we are also steadfast in our commitment to enhancing the lives of our local communities. The remarkable success of our MWBE participation underscores the transformative potential of inclusion and innovation working together, fostering opportunities, jobs, and tangible benefits for our local businesses."



Julia Lauria-Blum, *Editor-in-Chief*
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(L.-R.): Julia Lauria-Blum, Beverly Holder, Ray Ringston, and Katie Bliss, touring the construction site at T6.



(L.-R.): Julia Lauria-Blum, and Jennifer Aument at the New Terminal One offices in Building 111 at JFK.



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AOA REFLECTIONS

On Time-Ready, Set, Go!

Long lines, delays, and construction are nothing new to those who work at the airport, and neither is striving to improve airport performance.

Today's travel experience is governed by the passenger bill of rights and many other metrics that continually monitor flight travel. These are not new concepts. Over the years, as airlines merged and new airlines appeared, on-time performance remains a constant operational issue. During my time working at Pan Am, the airline merged with National Airlines. Merging two companies, even in the same industry, is not easy.

I accepted a position in Miami while working for PanAm and relocated to sunny Florida. My responsibilities included overall operations for flights at Miami International Airport and the southeast region. At the same time, many new hires for above- and below-wing operations had been hired at JFK, and overall on-time performance was at an all-time low in the 20th percentile. I was asked to join a JFK Performance Task Force with another employee from NYCOX-systems control. So, I headed back up north and moved into one of the airport hotels for over five weeks to join the task force.

I arrived back at JFK to long lines at check-in positions and immediately thought I had made the wrong decision by coming back! Our first goal was to increase morning and key international flight performance levels. The 20th percentile was not acceptable. Training new employees began, and after a few weeks, we had made some progress with on-time performance slowly increasing up to the 70-80 percentile, and we were on our way. Several meetings at PanAm headquarters with executive staff were held to explain the progress and the next steps. I was asked to stay on at JFK after the task force concluded, but I diplomatically declined. We were in the middle of construction in Miami with the Concourse F expansion project and other projects in the southeast region that needed to be completed.

I returned to Miami to continue with the 26-gate expansion project. I also successfully negotiated with the FAA for the vacant control tower for our service control operations of the E and F concourse. The use of the tower was imperative for increased on-time performance at Miami due to the fact that there were four peak periods: morning, midday, evening, and late night. I recall attending many construction meetings with local employees who had a hard time pronouncing my name. They would fondly refer to me as "Bubba" instead. We all worked together to complete the concourse project on time and under budget.

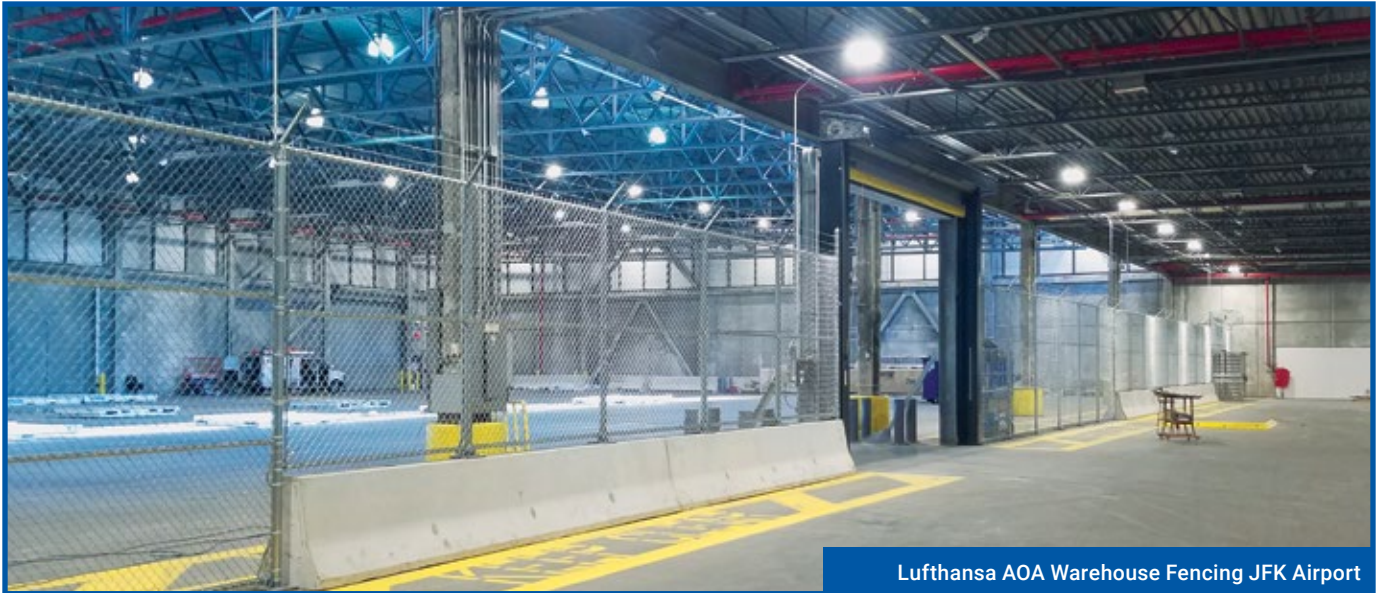
Many of the Miami and southeast region employees had come from National Airlines. My boss was a former marketing executive from National and needed to gain experience in airline operations. I recall he had a coffee mug that made a statement about his marketing genius in his office.



We were expecting a visit from some of the PanAm executive staff, so I suggested that my boss get rid of the mug. Of course, he didn't get rid of it, and the mug was spotted. The PanAm executive suggested that it should have read "best baggage and on-time performance" and proceeded to throw the mug in the garbage. Just another typical day in the airline industry! ■



JERRY SPAMPANATO was the General Manager at John F. Kennedy International Airport in the Aviation Department of the PANYNJ. He was responsible for daily operations, directing the activities of 500 staff members within an annual budget of \$300 million. An airline and Port Authority executive with extensive experience, Jerry assumed various roles, including operations, customer service, maintenance, security, cargo, facilities, and labor relations. Jerry continues to be an active airport community member donating his time to the JFK Chamber of Commerce, Our Lady of the Skies Catholic Guild, School Sisters of Notre Dame, and York College.



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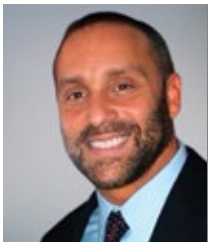
Vasu Raja

■ **American Airlines Group Inc.** announced that **Vasu Raja**, Executive Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer, will depart the airline in June. Raja has served as American's Chief Commercial Officer since April 2022. Previously, he was the Chief Revenue Officer and Senior Vice President of Network Strategy, where he was responsible for Networks and Alliances. He joined American in 2004 and has held various roles in Sales, Planning, and Revenue Management. In addition to his current responsibilities, Stephen Johnson, Vice Chair and Chief Strategy Officer, will assume leadership of the Commercial organization and help lead the search for a new Chief Commercial Officer effective immediately.



Sikander Jain

■ **Arora Engineers, LLC** recently announced the addition of **Sikander Jain, PE, CM**, as its new Senior Vice President of Global Construction Services, NY Market Lead. Sikander brings a wealth of experience and a lifelong commitment to driving complex and impactful growth initiatives within airport development projects across various roles. Widely regarded as an expert and leader in his field, Sikander has earned recognition for delivering innovative, sustainable, and cost-effective solutions to navigate the intricacies of large-scale aviation programs worldwide, often operating within challenging constraints and leading extensive teams.



Vincent Iacopella

■ **Alba Wheels Up International** recently announced that **Vincent Iacopella** has been promoted to Executive Vice President of Strategic Growth and President of Government & Trade Relations. Vince Iacopella's career spans over thirty years in the logistics industry. Vince specializes in helping clients navigate the complexities of regulatory requirements for trade-sensitive products and merchandise.



Jan-Wilhelm Breithaupt

■ **Dr. Jan-Wilhelm Breithaupt** has been appointed CEO of **Jettainer**, the global leader in Unit Load Device (ULD) management services, effective June 1, 2024. He succeeds **Thomas Sonntag**, who has overseen the company's international growth since 2019 and is leaving the Lufthansa Group at his own request, effective July 1. Dr. Breithaupt, holds a doctorate in production logistics and has been driving industry-wide digital transformation projects and process improvement initiatives for more than 20 years. He held various positions within the Lufthansa Group and was most recently responsible for global customer service and handling management at Lufthansa Cargo.



Christy Nevel

■ **Christy Nevel** has joined **HNTB Corporation** as national marketing director and vice president. She will focus on strategic planning, clients, pursuits, and firmwide initiatives to drive sales and revenue growth nationally. Nevel has more than 30 years of marketing and communications experience in the architecture, engineering, and construction services industries.



Claudia Husemann

■ **Ferrovial** announced the appointment of **Claudia Husemann** as director of communications and corporate social responsibility (CSR) for the United States. Husemann brings decades of experience leading strategic communications, translating complex sectors and business models in engaging ways to reach diverse audiences. She joins the company ahead of its public listing in the U.S. and as global leadership looks to North America for continued strong growth.

■ **The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey (PANYNJ)** recently announced the appointment of two new Deputy General Managers at John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK). Emanuel Ciminiello and Stephen Williams will join the General Manager's Office as part of a strategic enhancement to its management structure. This expansion comes at a pivotal time as the airport undergoes a \$19.5 billion redevelopment initiative designed to transform PANYNJ facilities and services while experiencing unprecedented growth that will surpass the passenger demand recorded in 2019.



Emanuel Ciminiello

Emanuel Ciminiello, PE, Deputy General Manager Operations, Maintenance and Construction, has extensive experience as the Airport Operations Manager and Physical Plant Manager at JFK and has 22 years of experience at the PANYNJ. Before his time at JFK, he was the Engineer of Construction at LaGuardia Airport (LGA) during the first few years of the LGA Redevelopment Program.



Stephen Williams

Stephen D. Williams, AAE, Deputy General Manager of Policy, Planning, and Administration, joins the PANYNJ from the Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA), where he held the position of Deputy Executive Director with over 40 years of airport and transportation management experience.

Adding a second Deputy General Manager reflects the commitment to ensuring that JFK Airport meets and exceeds the operational and customer service standards expected of a world-class facility. ■

AIRPORT INTEL

Aer Lingus Selects New JFK Terminal 6 for Operations Beginning in Early 2026

JFK Millennium Partners (JMP), the company selected by the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey to build and operate John F. Kennedy International Airport's new world-class, \$4.2 billion Terminal 6, and Aer Lingus announced that the airline will make Terminal 6 its new home at JFK and begin operations on the first day of the Terminal's opening to passengers in early 2026. In addition, Aer Lingus will open a new signature lounge in Terminal 6 for its passengers, providing a modern state-of-the-art space with greater seating capacity, ensuring more comfort and space for Aer Lingus customers.

All customers can look forward to the Terminal's boutique, state-of-the-art design, with short walking distances to and from gates, curated artwork, and 100,000 square feet of NYC-inspired shopping and dining. A new Aer Lingus check-in space will allow for a seamless check-in experience with self-service bag drop options for greater convenience. Aer Lingus customers can enjoy seamless connectivity within the same terminal with connecting partner JetBlue.

Aer Lingus currently operates twice daily nonstop service from JFK Terminal 7 to Dublin and daily to Shannon, Ireland, as well as daily service to Manchester,



England, using Airbus A330 and A321LR aircraft. A dedicated Aer Lingus lounge is also currently available to premium passengers at JFK Terminal 7. With US Pre Clearance facilities in Dublin and Shannon, Aer Lingus passengers using the Dublin-JFK and Shannon-JFK flights clear US immigration and customs inspections before boarding the flight to JFK, facilitating an easy exit from the airport on arrival.

"We've enjoyed a close partnership with Aer Lingus since they moved to JFK Terminal 7 in April 2023, and we're thrilled to continue this partnership at the new T6 and welcome their passengers on our very

first day of operations in early 2026," said Steve Thody, CEO, JFK Millennium Partners.

"We are looking forward to our move to JFK Terminal 6 when construction is completed," said Susanne Carberry, Aer Lingus Chief Customer Officer. "The new terminal promises Aer Lingus customers a modern, light-filled, tech-enabled space, which will allow us to go above and beyond for our customers. The addition of a brand-new dedicated Aer Lingus lounge will further enhance our loyal customer's experience, providing them with a modern state-of-the-art lounge." ■

Republic Airport's "Green FRG" Tree Planting Celebration

On May 23rd, Republic Airport staff members held a 'Green FRG' event to plant new trees at the airport entrance on Route 109 in Farmingdale. Republic Airport Commission member Stella Barbera, and New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) Director Lowell Lingo were there to lend a hand. ■



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Creating a Northstar

Steve Thody, CEO JFK Millennium Partners & the Terminal 6 Team

JULIA LAURIA-BLUM
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In April 2024, Steve Thody was appointed Chief Executive Officer of JFK Millennium Partners (JMP) at Terminal 6. Twenty-five years prior to his role as the new CEO at Terminal 6 at John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK), Thody lived in the United Kingdom and began his career there as a finance analyst for FedEx.

As fate would have it while discussing how he landed at John F. Kennedy International Airport during an interview with *Metropolitan Airport News*, Thody remarked, “Once

you get jet fuel in your veins, it's really hard to back out and go somewhere else, so I fell into my role at FedEx for a couple of years and then I decided that I wanted to go into passenger aviation.”

Following his muse, he applied for a position at British Airways and spent the next eighteen and a half years with the airline – two years in the UK and sixteen and a half years in New York, where he moved in 2003.

Thody filled various roles throughout the organization, including several senior roles in and outside of finance. His last role with British Airways was as General Manager of Terminal 7 (T7) at JFK. Thody then

met the Vantage Airport Group as part of his role at T7, and later, an opportunity came up for him to join Vantage. As soon as he met **George Casey**, the CEO of Vantage Airport Group, and some of the other senior executives, he knew that their corporate culture was a perfect fit for him because it was all about letting people collaborate and try new things while looking at the customer journey through a different lens. “Airlines can be very much cost-focused. Working as a terminal operator with a lot of events under an airline isn’t the same as when you work for a company that is truly a terminal operator, where their core

business is to deliver a world-class guest experience for everybody that arrives at the curb and leaves through the gate, or comes from the gate and leaves through the curb. You want that to be the best experience possible,” explained Thody.

When he joined the Vantage Airport Group, Thody went to LaGuardia’s Terminal B and spent a few years there. “I take absolutely no credit for LaGuardia Terminal B,” he emphasized, “that program was well underway before I got there, but it gave me an opportunity to see the executive team and how they look at the Airport and the way they look at innovation, trialing new technology, and new ways to enhance the guest experience...which is different from the way an airline looks at the Airport. It just really works for me as an individual.”

In 2022, Thody had the opportunity to jump across and help with the \$4.2 billion Terminal 6 (T6) Redevelopment Project at JFK and get it to financial close that November. He immediately took on the role of Chief Operating Officer at JFK Millennium Partners (JMP) leading up to January 2024, when he became the interim CEO of T6. Thody was appointed as the permanent CEO at JFK Millennium Partners (JMP) Terminal 6 in April.

JMP is developing the new Terminal 6 in two phases. The first new gates will open in 2026, and construction will be completed in 2028. The new terminal will create an anchor for passenger travel on JFK’s north side, spanning the sites of the former



Steve Thody, CEO,
JFK Millennium Partners & Terminal 6

Terminal 6 (torn down in 2011) and the existing Terminal 7. JMP is managing T7 until the 50-year-old facility is demolished in 2026 to make way for the second phase of construction.

When planning the transformation of JFK International Airport into a world-class gateway, Thody and the JMP team looked at the \$19 billion public/private redevelopment program as a whole. The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey (PANYNJ) had taken some of the learnings from the LaGuardia Airport redevelopment project by seeing how much an airport can be completely transformed in a relatively short period of time through a P3 (Public/ Private Partnership) – changing LaGuardia from being considered the worst Airport to the best Airport in the world in 2023 at Terminal B.

Steve Thody’s philosophy as a leader is to create a Northstar for his team. “It’s really good when your Northstar is to build a brand new terminal at JFK, the United States’ largest international gateway for passengers. Create a Northstar so everybody rallies behind that,” said Thody.

It is an immense project. At JFK, in addition to the T6 redevelopment program, are the expansions at JFKIAT4 and Terminal 8 and the New Terminal One (NTO) on the southern premise. Also, while T6 partner JetBlue will remain in its domicile at the adjacent Terminal 5, the airline will have new airside and landside connections to the new T6.

In discussing this connection, Thody remarked, “While all of the terminals at JFK Airport stand alone, as the redevelopment of T6 progresses, the connection with JetBlue at the adjacent Terminal 5 begins to do one thing that the Airport has struggled with in the past – the interconnectivity of transferring passengers. Having T6 as the terminal that will handle airlines largely from an international perspective, and that would likely have some connecting traffic with JetBlue, we will be able to seamlessly connect people, as the AirTrain does.

So now, if you are arriving on JetBlue as a domestic passenger and transferring to an international flight, you can literally walk down the corridor onto your international flight without exiting the Air Train or going back into TSA. All of that takes a lot of time, and one of the things Vantage looks at is how we de-stress the passenger journey and what T6 will do that is different from other terminals to provide a better connecting platform for passengers.

It’s a lot bigger an area than Terminal 7, more than twice the square footage, and that is a testament to the way aviation has grown – it being seat density, larger aircraft, flying long ranges, quick turnarounds of aircraft, all of those arriving to the passenger demand. It is also the biochemistry of the traveling public - having natural light coming through the windows and being able to connect with the daytime and nighttime that actually has physical effects on the human body. So, T6 is moving away from a concrete T7 to this big, airy structure with lots of windows and natural light, including two large oculus’ in the roof,

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allowing the natural light to come down into the main areas. That is going to be a big change,” said Thody.

Challenges & Milestones

Progression on the construction of T6 has been tremendous since its groundbreaking in February 2023. Progress on a project of this magnitude while operating an airport presents its share of challenges, as well as its share of milestones.

Thody said, “We have a lot of concrete that is poured across the different levels, which allows us to get to a place where we can walk around the building without it being a dangerous construction site because before they are laid down, you have lots of different things to go around. For me, probably the most exciting thing that has changed in weeks is the glass exterior wall.

When you start seeing the glass go in, and it’s going in at a very quick rate, it really makes the building come to life and you can start to see everything. The concrete floors with the windows start to signal that we are not far away from being able to tour the inside of the building, which is always exciting because it’s constantly changing!”

In connecting with P3 Partner JetBlue at Terminal 5, there is work to be done in moving Gate 30 to its new position. This was a key challenge to work through and get out of the way in order to allow the finish of construction.

While construction at T6 is quite visible to anyone within the airport’s perimeter, the baggage handling system in the building is less visible to the public, with much of its installation now done ahead of schedule.

Another interesting and very visible challenge in the entire \$19 billion P3

redevelopment at JFK Airport is that there are three different major parties that are impacting the road system. As roadways and infrastructure start to go in around the new T6, the new building will get a brand new roadway infrastructure across three different levels that will allow a good flow of traffic. Coordination between the NTO, Terminal 6, and the Port Authority’s road system is a top priority. Thody emphasized, “We are all changing roads, and we have to make sure that we carefully coordinate between us to ensure that the public traveling today, and the staff who are coming in and out of the airport know where they are going and that it will make sense.”

Additionally, T6 will be the only terminal at JFK Airport with access to two AirTrain stations, one adjacent to Terminal 5, located on the eastern side of the T6 check-in hall, and the second, set to open in the western T6 check-in area (where the current T7 station is).

As construction on the new Terminal 6 grows, gate capacity at the adjacent T7 will be reduced, putting some pressure on T7 operations. “We have that very well planned in terms of how we will accommodate all the carriers and passengers in the building. Obviously, fewer gates create more challenges in the operation,” said Thody.

A Triumphant Terminal 7

With the financial closing of the T6 project in November 2022 and JFK Millennium Partners taking over the Terminal 7 operations in December when British Airways left the terminal, Thody said, “We were fortunate to stand up a really, really good team and spent a lot of time ensuring that we selected the right people who bring in the same culture from the Vantage standpoint – collaboration and team effort. For me, as a leader, it is really about letting people release. Everybody knows how to do their job. It’s about me ensuring and providing some guard rails to keep people going in the right direction. We’ve learned over the last year that if you show people where you are heading and you let them go there, they will.”

Laying the target out as a team when JMP took over T7 showed a significant improvement over the way the old terminal was before, resulting in it being the most

Continued On Page 18

Coming Soon at the New Terminal 6

- Commissioned artists and Airport Concessions will be announced in the coming weeks.
- The Lufthansa Lounge: Lufthansa is building a massive 33,000-square-foot lounge in Terminal 6. It will be twice the size of its current lounge at Terminal 1.
- Lufthansa, SWISS, Austrian Airlines, Brussels Airlines, and the recently announced Aer Lingus will operate from the new Terminal 6 beginning in 2026.
- Ten gates, of which nine will accommodate wide-body aircraft.
- 5-minute average walking distances from the TSA security screening exit to gates.
- State-of-the-art automated baggage system, customs/border control facilities, and the latest TSA screening technologies.
- One of the longest departures curbs at JFK, with airline-branded passenger drop-off zones.
- Up to five airline lounges, in addition to a new arrivals lounge.
- Digital concierge services.
- A curated collection of New York City-inspired artwork featuring local and international artists, curated by the Public Art Fund in partnership with JMP and the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey.
- Sustainably sourced building materials, rooftop solar power, energy-efficient systems, and operating practices throughout Terminal 6.
- Sustainability certifications for LEED (silver or gold), Envision, and SITES are underway.
- A new ground transportation center.



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improved terminal across the Port Authority network in 2023, winning several awards. “We created a bit of a buzz around how we work with our airline customers and how we are transforming and changing the building,” said Thody, “Even British Airways staff who had worked in the building for 20 years came back to see the building, and they were like, ‘This doesn’t even feel like the same building.’ It was a testament to the entire team at the airport and the terminal that they put effort into every aspect of the journey,” exclaimed Thody.

T7 is setting the bar high by taking on additional flights and airlines while seamlessly managing operations. The most recent new airlines joining T7 are Frontier, which began its first service out of JFK this month, and HiSky, which offers flights to and from Bucharest, Romania.

Sustainability Highlights

Sustainability has been built into the design of Terminal 6, with more than 6,000 rooftop solar panels being installed. A gray water capture system will also help with this initiative. Large, floor-to-ceiling windows and two giant oculus skylights will provide ample natural light and warmth during the winter. In addition, all T6 ramp vehicles and ground handling equipment will be electric, according to Thody – with the RFP for that work coming out shortly.

Rishali Chplot, Manager, Environment & Sustainability, is part of the team working on in-terminal sustainability and certifications and how JMP will partner with their concessioners, as much of the waste generated in the building comes through vendors that provide food and beverage options to the traveling public. To address this critical issue, JMP will focus on reducing the quantity of non-recyclable materials and aim to organize the recyclables to simplify the process for their partner, Royal Waste, to sort and recycle them effectively and maximize the amount of materials that can be reused.

Upon completing the first phase of construction on the new Terminal 6 in 2026, the adjacent T7 will close and subsequently come down. It will be an overnight change, whereas the carriers there will transfer to the brand-new T6. Once that is done, the



(L.-R.): John Girardi, Deputy Director, Design & Construction; Jennifer Janzen, Communications Director; Derek Thielmann, Vice President, Design & Construction / Project Director; Kasia Sek, Director, Operations Planning & Implementation; Ed Ratuski, Acting COO; Sade Olanipekun-Lewis, Vice President, Operating & Community Partnerships.

decommissioning of T7 will begin by emptying the building and tearing down some internal structures. At that point, the old T7 will be pulled down, and all its debris will be carted away and recycled. With this being another point of sustainability comes the realization of recycling old concrete by taking it, crushing it, cleaning it, and reusing some of it.

Design & Technology Goals

“We aim to be another 5-star Startrax-rated terminal. If we fall anything short of that as a team, we will feel we missed the mark. So we’re fully focused on and dedicated to that,” asserted Thody.

There is a big push on technology, an opportunity to provide guests with options and account for the different traveling

personas, hence, a business traveler versus the family traveler versus the group of people traveling together. “I use myself as an example,” said Thody. “If I travel on my own on business, I travel very differently than when I travel with my wife and two kids. So, I have two very different traveler personas depending on the type of trip. So, how do we account for those throughout the journey; how do we use technology to enable those different travel personas to interact with the terminal in the way they want to? Is that complete self-service, is it biometrics, or somebody who wants to talk to somebody at every step of the journey, or to be reinforced because they are a nervous traveler? How do we think about the ADA travel journey? Ensuring that everything

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we introduce has an ADA aspect to ensure that we are accounting for another traveler type.” Whether from technology to design, from the restrooms to the air circulation in the building, everything is designed to account for all these different travelers.

On Track Diversity Initiatives

The T6 redevelopment program is on track to achieve or exceed MWBE (Minority/Women-owned Business Enterprise) goals. There is a big focus on local businesses and MWBEs with elected officials. “There have been many engaging conversations around ensuring that when we allow local businesses to come and be part of this journey, that we are doing it in a responsible way,” emphasized Thody

The next phase of the concessions implementation is specifically focused on the local community and will be launched this summer (2024) in three parts.

The first is the food hall area, which is all local businesses, ACDBEs (Airport Concessions Disadvantaged Business Enterprises); the second part is larger restaurants, Duty-Free, news & convenience shops. All those require at least 35% ACDBE participation to ensure they are part of the program; the third part being launched is the Institute of Concessions,

which is a program run by the Port Authority that is designed to equip local and diverse businesses with the skills and competencies to compete for and successfully operate at the world-class JFK International Airport. “There is a whole training syllabus. We are dedicating five spaces to this; three are actual spaces, and two are kiosks in the building that JFK Millennium Partners is funding. We are providing the capital that allows these businesses to come into the airport at a lower risk, where they just bring their merchandise, point of sale, and branding signage. They get the opportunity to experience working in the airport without needing to re-mortgage their house.”

Arts & NY Culture


In the surrounding areas of the T6 building, JMP has commissioned about 20 art pieces thus far in partnership with The Public Art Fund, which will help curate some world-class designs and art that will be placed throughout the journey in various mediums to allow customers to decompress and look at what’s going on around them. Even if just passing by, it will be different than being in a regular terminal. While the selection process is not finished yet, several artists have been selected, and JMP is working with them on the process of

how to refine and ensure that the artworks fit in suitable spaces and have the proper lighting for that experience so that the pieces will supplement the airport journey and overall vibe.

On the airside, post-security, there will be something like the water feature at LaGuardia, something different that keeps people entertained or makes them feel relaxed or engaged. “Our view is that a lot of people think about their journey where their vacation starts when they get on the plane. We like to think about their journey starting when they are in the airport and how we make that experience just as pleasant as the rest of their vacation, or where they are going,” stated Thody, adding, “Rick Cotton, PANYNJ Executive Director, has a very strong view that people should know that they’re in a New York airport.

So, while not everything is to be part of New York, you need to have enough elements so people know that if you take a picture in the terminal and post it online, people will say, “That’s JFK’s Terminal 6 !” With all the incredible progress and milestones achieved in little over one year since the groundbreaking of the new Terminal 6 at JFK, its Northstar draws closer each day, alongside the promise of an outstanding and impressive world-class global gateway – one that New York truly deserves. ■





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Air Atlanta: Quality versus Delta and Eastern Goliaths



An Air Atlanta Boeing 727-100 at Miami International Airport in 1987

BY ROBERT G. WALDVOGEL
robertw@metroairportnews.com

Deregulation offered entrepreneurs opportunities to craft their own versions of airlines, which varied in concept, fare structure, and destination, and passengers the opportunities to choose new, major carrier-challenging ones. Because of their tenuous natures, the battle between them and the established ones was often a David versus Goliath one, and successes were only temporary, if at all. Air Atlanta fits into this category.

“Air Atlanta was an anomaly in the airline industry,” according to Tiffany Hart in her “Gone, but not Forgotten: Air Atlanta” article (Atlanta History Center, September 28, 2023). “It was a low-cost carrier that ferried passengers in its distinctive gray, blue, and burgundy Boeing 727s to major destinations, such as Miami, Tampa, Orlando, and Washington.”

Salmon return to their birthplaces to spawn. Many entrepreneurs do the same to give birth to their airlines. In the case of Air Atlanta, it was Michael R. Hollis drawn back to its namesake city. Born and raised there and living by the “can do” philosophy that he changed to “will do,” he practiced law in that very city before joining Oppenheimer and Company and moving away. But he researched the airline scene and

ultimately concluded that there was “a hell of an opportunity” back there for a new one, and “back there” is where he went.

An international crossroads and the US’s largest airport in terms of passengers processed, it was ripe for a new concept that catered to business clientele.

“For years, the business flyer has been the airlines’ best customer,” according to the carrier. “But airline service has been geared to the masses. Air Atlanta doesn’t cater to the crowds. We cater to business. Because we’re specialized, we can fly when it’s convenient for you. Starting with schedules designed for the business day. And including times that let you sleep late and still make your meeting.”

Although he had no airline experience and a personal bank account that topped out at \$500, he was never known for just “talking the talk.” While he had a plan in one hand, it served no purpose without funding in the other. And toward that end, the origins of his funding were nothing less than a family affair. Both his mother and godmother threw \$35,000 into the pot—their life savings—and other relatives filled it to the \$100,000 brim.

Hardly enough to cover the cost of a single airplane, it became the seed that sprouted into a significant harvest when he

used his high-profile connections as branches—in this case, the National Alliance of Postal and Federal Employees (NAPFE), which acquired 400,000 shares for \$500,000. It certainly constituted a firmer beginning.

But an airline also required experienced people and the fledgling carrier attracted some heavyweights who provided exactly that—Roden Brandt, former Service Vice President for Pan Am; Robin H. H. Wilson of TWA; and James Purcell of the FAA. They not only established its foundational experience, they also elevated its image before it even took flight and attracted additional investors.

Air Atlanta, with Hollis as its founder, chairman, and CEO, was incorporated in May of 1981. Promise was high. President Ronald Regan praised it as a beacon of free enterprise, and Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson endorsed it as the city’s carrier.

Taking Flight

Provisioned with five leased 727-100s, 420 employees, and a route system that was a shadow of that of the major carriers, it advertised its inaugural, February 1, 1984, service in the January 30, 1984 issue of the Atlanta Constitution.

“Air Atlanta’s first flight is at 7:45 a.m., Wednesday, to Memphis, Tennessee,” it said. “A half-hour before the flight, Mayor Andrew Young will hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony at Hartsfield International Airport. The first jet airline to be founded in Atlanta this decade, the business-oriented carrier is initiating service to Memphis and New York’s JFK Airport with specially reconfigured Boeing 727-100s. A first-class round-trip fare to Memphis is \$344 and a round-trip coach ticket is \$286.”

While carrier commonality entails air transportation between two points, how they do so becomes the variation, and Air Atlanta put many pieces into place to do so differently.

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In Atlanta, a curbside security check-point and a “GateExpress” bus enabled passengers to bypass airport congestion and be transported directly to the aircraft only minutes before its departure. For those wishing to make their way through the labyrinth of concourses, a waiting area at the gate more suggestive of a lounge, with beverages and newspapers, was available. From there, the industry’s first roll-on garment bag valet freed them of the burden and was secured in a forward, left position on the aircraft.

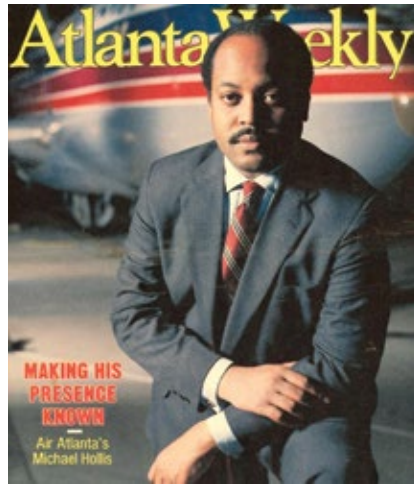
Its five leased, former United Airlines 727-100s, with subdued interior color schemes, accommodated 20 four-abreast first and 68 five-abreast coach class passengers, or an 88 total that was a third less than the aircraft’s certified single-class maximum.

“Air Atlanta flies the jet that business travelers told us they prefer for trips of two hours or less: the reliable Boeing 727,” the carrier advertised. “Familiar on the outside, but on the inside it’s a whole different plane. We’ve completely redesigned it to add substantially more space for carry-on baggage, including a roll-on valet. We put only 88 seats on board. That’s 20 percent less than most airlines squeeze in. And that’s a lot more legroom and more comfort.”

Dining was always on formally set tray tables with white linens, china, and crystal stemware. Selections, according to the time of day, were more reflective of those served by a five-star restaurant, including peach crepes dusted with cinnamon; broccoli, mushroom, and cheddar cheese pastry cups; duck a l’orange; creole chicken with almond-pineapple rice; veal chanterelle; and French petite fours.

“From the moment I founded Air Atlanta, it has been dedicated to the standards of experience, commitment, and excellence,” according to Hollis. “Our success results from the dedication of our many professionals who know that the business traveler wants a better type of service. We at Air Atlanta make a commitment to make business travel a positive experience, to bring service back in vogue and to do so at competitive fares.”

By the summer of 1984, it served the four east coast destinations of Atlanta,



Memphis, Miami, and New York-JFK, with four to five daily frequencies to each. Operating from the Pan Am Worldport at the latter one, it served as “Air Atlanta Pan Am Express,” feeding passengers to the larger carrier’s flights. “One ticket. One check-in. One baggage claim,” it stated. “From Atlanta to Memphis to more than 45 cities worldwide.”

Although its handful of David-comparable flights posed little threat to the Delta and Eastern Goliaths at their fortress Georgia hub, they initially engaged in a Cold War with it, refusing to list its flights in their computer reservation systems (CRS) and interning with it. Delta was particularly resentful of a carrier that bore the name of, and received political endorsement to be, the city’s namesake one since Delta itself touted itself as its “hometown airline.”

Its aircraft climbed much faster than did its load factors, which began at a paltry 32.2 percent, but rose to 44 percent. By December of 1984, it was losing about \$800,000 per month, despite passenger accolades. Nevertheless, it made progress.

Of the 114 requests for the 25 available slots at La Guardia, the preferred New York airport because of its Manhattan proximity, it won four. By December 1, 1986, it served the 11 Northeast, Midwest, and southeast destinations of Detroit, Ft. Myers, Greenbrier/Lewisburg, Memphis, Miami, New Orleans, New York, Orlando, Philadelphia, Tampa, and Washington with more than 30 daily departures from its Georgia flight base. And the Delta-Eastern relationship thawed: Air Atlanta finally achieved a listing in their CRS. But the financial picture told a different story.

Turbulent Terminus

An airline concept can only sound if its revenues exceed its expenses. Air Atlanta’s did not, and only continued investments, along with Hollis’ faith, kept it in the air—at least for the time being. But an article in Business Week illustrated the carrier’s reality.

“In the 21 months since Hollis launched Air Atlanta, the privately-held company has been unsuccessful, wooing business travelers with a mix of roomy seats, fancy meals, and free booze at airport waiting areas,” *Business Week* pointed out in its November 18, 1985 article, “Air Atlanta is Scratching Just to Pay the Rent.” “The formula hasn’t worked. Losses are at \$35 million—and climbing.”

Desperate and unable for a time to even pay its rent at Hartsfield International Airport, it searched for a buyer, with the greatest prospect offered by Kimberly-Clark Corporation, which already owned Midwest Express Airlines. It would have given it air service divisions with both midwestern and southeastern hubs. But talks stalled, as did the airline, and this forced it into a final, Chapter 11 bankruptcy landing on April 2, 1987, or little more than three years after it had taken off. Although it could hardly be credited with financial success, there are other measures of this achievement.

“The story of Air Atlanta is a testament to the tenacity of the human spirit,” according to Tiffany Hart (op. cit.). “As Vice President of Properties at the Atlanta History Center Jackson McQuigg pointed out, Air Atlanta faced impossible odds in the deregulated era. Its existence and brief success in such a competitive space is remarkable.”

Nevertheless, in the end, David failed to win the battle with the airline Goliaths. ■



ROBERT G. WALDVOGEL

spent thirty years working at JFK International and LaGuardia airports with the likes of Capitol Air, Midway Airlines, Triangle Aviation

Services, Royal Jordanian Airlines, Austrian Airlines, and Lufthansa in Ground Operations and Management. He has created and taught aviation programs on both the airline and university level and is an aviation author.

Proto Hologram Expands Into Terminal 4 at JFK

The first free-standing, lifelike hologram device in an airport is at JFK Terminal 4. It features arts and culture content and the occasional live interactive beam-in from Howie Mandel.

Proto, the original patented hologram device and platform that makes holoportation a reality, announced that its advisor, **Howie Mandel**, will beam in live to surprise travelers at John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK) Terminal 4, operated by JFKIAT. The *America's Got Talent* star is celebrating the recently expanded use of Proto at the terminal, including the presentation of Bronx Zoo Director **Jim Breheny** introducing sloths, alligators, pelicans, owls, and warthogs in holographic form.

The people, animals and objects in the Proto units appear in life-size, volumetric 4K – looking exactly as if they are physically present in the terminal. When a guest beams in live, they can interact with travelers in real time. Mandel has previously recorded a hologram explaining Terminal 4's T4 Arts & Culture program and the Proto



technology, and now he will beam there live for the first time.

“Excited about traveling through JFK Terminal 4 today. My airline of choice is Proto,” said Howie Mandel. “I love to travel without traveling – Beam me there!”

Proto’s AI capabilities are also being explored for more interactive traveler experiences.

“There’s something like magic that happens when people see Proto holograms for the first time,” said David Nussbaum, Inventor and CEO of Proto Inc. “At JFK Terminal 4, the whole world is stopping by and having this experience every day. To see the New York area’s best people and places represented in our devices in this amazing space really is a dream come true.” ■



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One-Day Trip to Nice and Eze



BY MAUREEN KATZ
mkatz@metroairportnews.com

A visit to Nice is a serene experience, especially in the springtime. The city, usually bustling with tourists, is a tranquil haven during this season. My husband Jon and I, frequent travelers to the Cote D'Azur, have recently discovered a gem – the Sheraton Nice Airport Hotel.

This conveniently located hotel, just across the street from the airport, offers a peaceful retreat. It's a short walk from the Nice Saint-Augustine train station (trains to Monte Carlo and Cannes) and the Grand

Arenas tram stop, making it an ideal base for exploring the city and its beaches.

We spent two days at this hotel. On our first day, we took a tram to Nice city center, which is 12 stops from the Sheraton Hotel. The major stop that everyone aims for is Massena, in the center of Nice. From there, we walked to the Old Town, which is one of the highlights of this city. It has narrow streets, numerous markets, churches, quaint restaurants, boutiques, and bars, some of which have water views of the Mediterranean.

After the Old Town, we walked to the Old

Port of Nice, also named Port Lympia. Of all the times we were in this city we had never visited the port. It is also a very scenic area and definitely worth visiting. It is a popular port-of-call for major cruise ships on the Mediterranean Sea. It also has yachts, sailboats, and ferryboats. The ferries go to Corsica, Sardinia, and St. Tropez. There is a tram stop named Port Lympia and we took it back to Grand Arenas which was the stop closest to our hotel.

On our final day in Nice, after a 10-year absence, we returned to Eze. It is located approximately five miles to the northeast of Nice and about three miles west of Monaco. We took a train from the Nice St. Augustin station to the Eze-Sur-Mer station; the travel time was about 23 minutes. The Eze-Sur-Mer station is located on the Mediterranean Sea; however, to get to the Village of Eze, it is necessary to either drive to the hilltop or hike up. There is also bus line 83 that travels to the top and takes about 15 minutes. It is a very scenic route, and it's incredible how the bus endures many hairpin turns. Our bus round-trip was packed, and we had to stand and hold on for our lives.

Eze is a medieval village, about 1,400 feet above sea level, and it has magnificent views of the Mediterranean Sea. No cars are allowed within the area, and there is something to see at every turn through narrow cobblestone walkways. Several boutiques, art galleries, and jewelry stores are along the winding walkways. Also, there is the Jardin Botanique D'Eze, best known for its collection of cacti and succulents, as well as its panoramic views. A wonderful way to admire the beautiful views is to go to the Chateau Eza and have a drink on the outdoor terrace.

After taking the train and bus combination to Eze-Sur-Mer, we learned that there is a nonstop bus from Nice to Eze Village (at the top of the mountain), and it was the best way to go. The Nice Bus Station, known as the Gare Vauban, has the number 82 or 112 buses that go directly to Eze and operate frequently, with travel time being about 30 minutes. ■



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UPCOMING EVENTS

The most comprehensive listing of New York & New Jersey airport and aviation events available anywhere online. www.metroairportnews.com/airport-events

June 5 – 7:00pm

CUNY 2024 MWBE | SDVOB Procurement Conference

John Jay College of Criminal Justice
New York, New York 10019
www.queenschamber.org

June 10 & 24 – 7:00pm

Civil Air Patrol Falcon Squadron Meeting

JFK International Airport, Building 14
Jamaica, New York 11430
www.falconsquadron.cap.gov

June 11

JFK Chamber at Top Golf

5231 Express Drive N,
Holtsville, NY 11742
jfkairportchamberofcommerce.org

June 11 – 7:00pm

Republic Airport Commission Meeting

Republic Airport-(FRG)
East Farmingdale, NY 11735
www.republicairport.net

June 12

KAAMCO Members Meeting

JFK International Airport
Building 14
Jamaica, New York 11430
www.kaamco.org

June 13

PANYNJ ACDBE Certification

Virtual Event
www.anewjfk.com

June 14 – 12:00pm

LaGuardia Airport Kiwanis Club 49th Annual Charity Ball

Leonard's Palazzo
Great Neck, New York 110219
www.lgakiwanis.org

June 17

KAAMCO Golf Tournament

Garden City Country Club
Garden City, New York 11530
www.kaamco.org

June 18

MWBE Certification Webinar

Virtual Event
www.anewjfk.com

June 20 – 11:45am

JFK Air Cargo Association Luncheon & Networking Event

Russo's On the Bay
Howard Beach, New York 11414
www.jfkaircargo.aero

June 20 – 6:00pm

Small Business Meet & Greet with HNTB and STV

Bulova Cafe
75-20 Astoria Blvd
Astoria, New York 11370
www.queenschamber.org

June 26

LaGuardia Airport Committee (LGAAC) Meeting

Virtual Event
aircraftnoise.panynj.gov

July 2

JFK Airport Rotary Club Dinner Meeting

Vetro Restaurant & Lounge
164-49 Cross Bay Blvd.
Howard Beach, New York 11414
www.jfkrotaryclub.org

July 9

ADDAPT Dinner Group

Heritage Club at Bethpage State Park
Farmingdale, New York 11735
www.addaptny.org

July 10

JFK Airport Chamber of Commerce General Meeting

John F. Kennedy International Airport
Jamaica, New York 11430
jfkairportchamberofcommerce.org

July 11

LAAMCO Monthly General Meeting

LaGuardia Airport-(LGA)
East Elmhurst, New York 11371
www.laamco.com

July 18

2024 Airport Community Golf Classic

Lawrence Yacht and Country Club
101 Causeway, Lawrence, NY 11559
www.acgolfclassic.com

July 24

New York Community Aviation Roundtable (NYCAR) Meeting

Virtual Event
aircraftnoise.panynj.gov

July 24

TEB Aircraft Noise Abatement Advisory Committee Meeting

90 Moonachie Ave.
Teterboro, New Jersey 07608
tanaac@teb.com

August 3

38th Annual Semantics & Friends Fishing Trip

540 Guy Lombardo Ave.
Freeport, New York 11520
www.thesemantics.org

August 15

Dan Ferrante Annual Golf Outing

Stonebridge Golf Club
Smithtown, New York 11787
www.dfgojfk.org

August 19

National Aviation Day

Sept 9

JFK Airport Rotary Club Ladies Golf Outing

Lawrence Yacht and Country Club
101 Causeway, Lawrence, NY 11559
www.jfkrotaryclub.org

Sept 16

Queens Chamber of Commerce Annual Golf Outing and Dinner

Garden City Country Club
Garden City, New York 11530
www.queenschamber.org

September 23

JFK Airport Chamber of Commerce Golf Outing

Brookville Country Club
Old Brookville, New York 11545
jfkairportchamberofcommerce.org

September 26

2024 Charles E. Stagg & Nicholas J. Mandella Memorial Golf Outing

Wind Watch Golf & Country Club
Hauppauge, New York 11788
www.thesemantics.org

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