

# WICHITA AIRPORT HISTORY

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*Wichita Municipal Airport  
1935*

## WICHITA MUNICIPAL AIRPORT (AIR CAPITAL TERMINAL 1)

The first airport is now the Kansas Aviation Museum, which operated 19 years, from 1935 – 1954. Construction began June 1929 on the administration building of the Wichita Municipal Airport, now THE present-day Kansas Aviation Museum. With the crash of the Stock Market and the start of the Great Depression in 1930, it took another five years before the building opened in 1935.

In January 1951, the United States Air Force announced its intention to establish a base large enough for 6,500 personnel in Wichita in just three weeks. Shortly after the announcement came word that the USAF would take over the Wichita Municipal Airport for pilot training on B-47s. All non-military operators were asked to stop using the facility as soon as possible, with the exception of commercial airline traffic. Construction soon began on what is the current Mid-Continent Airport and by 1954, all non-military traffic including commercial airline traffic moved to Mid-Continent.

## WICHITA MID-CONTINENT AIRPORT (AIR CAPITAL TERMINAL 2)

Wichita Municipal Airport/Wichita Mid-Continent Airport – April 1954 – May 2015. In January 1951, the Air Force established a Base at the Wichita Municipal Airport. Construction soon began on Wichita Mid-Continent Airport. It was determined that approximately 1,921 acres would be needed to accommodate the present and future needs of an airport for Wichita. Mid-Continent Airport opened at its present location on 1,921 acres in southwest





Wichita Mid-Continent Airport 1954

Wichita, first to general aviation in 1953, and then to commercial flights in 1954. Cessna and Learjet located plants adjacent to the airfield and furthered our claim as Air Capital of the World by producing more than half of the world's general aviation twin engine and turbojet aircraft. See [Brick and Tile 1954](#) for historical pictures.

#### Commercial Airlines in 1954:

- Braniff Airways, Inc.
- Continental Air Lines, Inc.
- Trans World Airlines, Inc.
  - and two feeder lines:
    - Central Airlines, Inc.
    - Ozark Airlines, Inc.

## CONSTRUCTION OF ACT 2

- General Contractor: Martin K. Eby Construction Co., Inc.
- Total cost: \$9,985,688.21
- Cost of Terminal Building alone:
  - Roads, walks, fencing, etc., main parking area
  - Building—tunnel, escalators, other —
  - Includes control tower main building: \$2,165,109.76
- Architects & Engineers: Thomas-Harris-Calvin and Associates
- Consultant: Leigh Fisher and Associates



On April 1, 1954, Mayor Walt Keeler cut the ribbon at Gate 2 to officially open the new airport for 42 passengers that just landed on a Braniff flight from Texas



## CONSTRUCTION OF ACT 2

### Contractors:

- Electrical: Southwestern Electrical Co.
- Mechanical
- Davidson Plumbing Company
- Ripstra-Turner Company

### Board of Park Commissioners:

- President: O.J. Watson
- Director: Emory L. Cox
- Engineer: W.R. Fleck
- Airport Manager: C. Edward Straub

## 1972 CONCOURSE RENOVATIONS

Architects: Calvin, Perkins, and Jones, P.A.

Contractor: Coonrod and Walz Construction Co., Inc.

### Board of Park Commissioners

- Director: H. Jay Setter
- Engineer: Floyd J. Roedell
- Airport Manager
- Edward Straub (1941-1971)
- James C. DeLong

## 1989 TERMINAL RENOVATIONS

- Architect: Oblinger Mason  
McCluggage & VanSickle Corporation
- General Contractor: Building Systems Corporation

### Wichita Airport Authority

- President: Gary Sherrer
- Director of Airports: Bailis F. Bell
- Director of Airport Engineering & Planning: Monroe L. Funk, P.E.
- Construction Superintendent: Ronald L. Parker



**1989 Aerial View**

## WICHITA DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER NATIONAL AIRPORT (ACT 3)



Air Capital Terminal 3 (ACT 3) - Wichita's third terminal building opened on June 3, 2015 with much fanfare and media attention. The first departure was on United Airlines; the first arrival was on Southwest Airlines. The first month of service saw a 6% increase in passengers. Learn more about the ACT 3 terminal [here](#).