

# COLUMBIA

## METROPOLITAN AIRPORT



2023 ANNUAL REPORT



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## CAE ARRIVALS

FROM	AIRLINE	FLIGHT	TIME	GATE	REMARKS
Washington	American Airlines	5327	3:21 PM		Now 3:03 PM
New York-LGA	<b>DELTA</b>	5407	3:54 PM		Now 3:21 PM
Charlotte	American Airlines	5063	4:00 PM		Now 3:44 PM
New York-LGA	American Airlines	4506	4:06 PM		Now 3:50 PM
Dallas FT. Worth	American Airlines	2028	4:44 PM		Now 4:33 PM
Chicago-Ohare	<b>UNITED</b>	5455	5:00 PM		Now 4:49 PM
Atlanta	<b>DELTA</b>	1067	5:02 PM		Now 4:56 PM
Philadelphia	American Airlines	6275	5:50 PM		Now 5:26 PM
Charlotte	American Airlines	5794	6:06 PM		Now 6:08 PM
Washington	American Airlines	5664	7:10 PM		On Time
Atlanta	<b>DELTA</b>	5056	7:13 PM		On Time
Washington-Dulles	<b>UNITED</b>	4364	7:27 PM		On Time
Charlotte	American Airlines	5742	8:15 PM		On Time
Philadelphia	American Airlines	6261	8:33 PM		On Time
Chicago-Ohare	<b>UNITED</b>	5456	9:06 PM		On Time
Chicago-Ohare	American Airlines	6247	9:22 PM		On Time
Atlanta	<b>DELTA</b>	1240	9:43 PM		Now 9:41 PM
New York-LGA	<b>DELTA</b>	5348	10:51 PM		Now 10:52 PM
Charlotte	American Airlines	5709	11:43 PM		On Time
Washington	American Airlines	5523	11:45 PM		On Time
Atlanta	<b>DELTA</b>	2139	11:59 PM		Now 11:57 PM
Dallas FT. Worth	American Airlines	2151	11:59 PM		On Time
Charlotte	American Airlines	5761	8:30 AM		On Time
Washington	American Airlines	5026	9:48 AM		On Time

**Fly Local. Fly CAE.**

Friday, October 13, 2023

2:34 pm

What Do...

2 PM

Proof of Identit...



# CAE DEPARTURES

DEPARTING TO	AIRLINE	FLIGHT	TIME	GATE	REMARKS
Atlanta	DELTA	1893	2:34 PM	7	Departed
Washington-Dulles	UNITED	4229	2:46 PM	1	Last call
Washington	American Airlines	5327	3:54 PM	3	On Time
Charlotte	American Airlines	5063	4:30 PM	3	On Time
New York-LGA	American Airlines	4506	4:36 PM	6	On Time
New York-LGA	DELTA	5407	5:30 PM	9	On Time
Dallas FT. Worth	American Airlines	2028	5:34 PM	4	On Time
Chicago-Ohare	UNITED	4708	5:41 PM	2	On Time
Atlanta	DELTA	1067	5:57 PM	7	Now 5:47 PM
Philadelphia	American Airlines	6275	6:15 PM	3	On Time
Charlotte	American Airlines	5794	6:32 PM	4	Now 6:34 PM
Washington	American Airlines	5494	7:46 PM	3	On Time
Atlanta	DELTA	5056	7:58 PM	9	On Time
Charlotte	American Airlines	5759	8:42 PM	3	On Time

Approved ID?

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CAE.

2:34 pm

# MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT & CEO MIKE GULA, A.A.E.

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*We appreciate the ongoing support of this community and look forward to another successful year. We can't wait to see you around the terminal throughout 2024!*

**Mike Gula, A.A.E.**  
*President & CEO*

Thank you for taking a moment to review Columbia Metropolitan Airport's 2023 annual report.

In all regards, 2023 was another banner year for CAE. We saw significant passenger traffic throughout the year, completed several in-terminal updates to our food, beverage, and retail spaces and began the important work of an Airport Master Plan. Across the airport the CAE team worked tirelessly to ensure that we held true to our organization's purpose – making memories, moving people and products, and growing for good.

While the start of the year saw predictably lower passenger traffic, the tide quickly turned in Q2 and increased consistently throughout the year.

On Friday, July 28th we saw 2,687 enplanements – a single-day record CAE had not hit since 2019. With the return of seasonal nonstop service to Miami on American Airlines (AA), the return of nonstop service to New York City (LGA) on AA, the addition of new nonstop service to Chicago on AA and the addition of a second nonstop to New York City (LGA) on Delta Air Lines, the Columbia, SC market had more options of routes and air service to choose from, making our airport the community's airport of choice – something we greatly appreciated.

Over the summer, we began the needed work on an updated Airport Master Plan. Local engineering consulting firm, Mead & Hunt, along with local professional services firm, DESA, were selected for the multi-phased, multi-year project.

With the last Airport Master Plan completed in 2012, it was time for the internal team along with support from regional stakeholders to reimagine the future of CAE and how a comprehensive, strengthened airport system could be the changemaker for growth across the entire region.

Once completed, the updated plan will focus on our current facilities, anticipated regional growth, amenities and concessions, ground transportation, airline seat capacity and more to determine how we can better meet our community and travelers' needs and wishes over the next 20 years.

Updating and enhancing our food, beverage and retail spaces throughout the airport has been a priority of the airport leadership for several years. Having national brands in the airport

had been a longstanding request of our passengers, and I'm proud to say we've met and exceeded this goal.

Last year, our airport food and beverage concessionaire, Carolina Concessions, LLC. added a Samuel Adams Columbia Brewhouse, Jimmy John's, and Dunkin', and is on track to open The Friendly Caterer To-Go on the landside by the spring of 2024.

Our retail concessionaire, Paradies Lagardère, opened Vista Trading (airside) and is currently completing renovations to the new Explore Columbia (airside) and Three Rivers (landside) locations. In addition to these shops, Paradies Lagardère also installed Avanti vending machines in the main lobby. These machines offer premium, upscale vending of both food, beverage, and travel items.

All these updates and renovations are taking place to remain current with industry standards, while also providing new, fresh and updated offerings to our valued passengers.

Behind the scenes, Team CAE is working hard to continue propelling each and every aspect of the airport forward. I'm extremely pleased with how many noteworthy projects we were able to complete that will directly improve our passengers' experiences while here. From finance, human resources and information technology to properties and facility management, maintenance, public safety, terminal support, operations, marketing, air service development and more, every department and every person is a vital piece of the larger puzzle that makes CAE function day after day.

As you'll read throughout this report, from in-terminal advancements to meaningful community service work, this airport – inclusive of our great staff – is more than a people mover. We work to make an impact and leave an impression. We hope you see that across every page and within every department.

We appreciate the ongoing support of this community and look forward to another successful year. We can't wait to see you around the terminal throughout 2024!

**Across the airport the CAE team worked tirelessly to ensure that we held true to our organization's purpose – making memories, moving people and products, and growing for good.**



**Mike Gula, A.A.E.**  
**President & CEO**  
**Columbia Metropolitan Airport**

# DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY



*I am thankful to step in and lead this department after the retirement of longtime team member, Eddie Martin. In an effort to hit the ground running, we incorporated a number of great initiatives into the department's ways of working, including increased trainings, crisis preparedness and a larger focus on partnerships and relationship-building. Myself and the entire team are excited for what lies ahead for this department and the continued main priority of making sure CAE is a safe and secure place for both its passengers and visitors.*

**Daniel Ruggiero**  
Chief of Public Safety



*Members of CAE's Public Safety team on bike patrol  
in front of Air Force 2*

# DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS & EXPERT TRAINING

In the last year, Department of Public Safety (DPS) has placed significant emphasis on training, preparedness, and relationship-building. Notable efforts involved organizing South Carolina Incident-Based Reporting System training by SLED, aiming to improve incident analysis capabilities.

Furthermore, DPS has partnered with agencies such as DHS Customs and Border Protection to conduct emergency response drills. These encompass activities like fire alarm testing and bomb threat exercises, contributing to the enhancement of officer readiness.

Recognizing the importance of partnerships, Chief Ruggiero has formalized agreements with key agencies. These include partnerships with DHS Homeland Security Investigations for joint narcotics investigations, collaboration with the DEA to utilize license plate reader technology, and coordination with SLED to provide DPS officers access to intelligence, investigative resources, and radiological testing equipment.

Operationally, DPS achieved outstanding results during the annual FAA inspection, showcasing the department's exceptional competencies. In addition, DPS enhanced communication capabilities by adopting the Pal 300 system, facilitating seamless coordination at both statewide and regional levels.

**In addition to daily duties, DPS team members served at the pleasure of President Biden, Former President Trump, and other elected officials during protected dignitary visits.**

Apart from daily duties, DPS extended its services to include dignitary protection for visits from President Biden, Former President Trump, and other candidates.

Moreover, DPS concentrated on operational improvement by conducting Active Shooter training for airport staff and reviewing emergency plans with partners. Officers also participated in live fire drills at the SC Fire Academy and underwent Explosive Incident Response Training in New Mexico.

## Human Trafficking

In our ongoing commitment to safety, all DPS officers have completed extensive Human Trafficking training. Captain Salazar facilitated Human Trafficking Awareness training for all airport badge holders, reinforcing our dedication to building a vigilant, informed community at CAE.

## Crisis Intervention

Ensuring preparedness for crisis situations, our DPS officers have achieved a 100% completion rate in Crisis Intervention training. Additionally, members of our force actively took part in Incident Response to Terrorist Bombings training in New Mexico, showcasing our dedication to maintaining a highly skilled and responsive security force.



*Mandy Bowden, Human Trafficking Coordinator for the Attorney General and Chief Daniel Ruggiero*



## PERSONNEL HIGHLIGHTS

Over the past year, the department underwent significant staffing changes and enhancements to strengthen its capabilities. In a move to provide robust leadership, Daniel Ruggiero earned a promotion to Chief of Public Safety. The department also welcomed new talents, including K9 officer Gauge, a service/therapy dog, dedicated to supporting community relations efforts.

To fortify investigative capabilities, Mickey Cooke transitioned into a full-time K9 investigator role, while K9 officer Hogan, specializing in narcotics detection, joined the team. Furthermore, Kevin Wrigley was promoted to C-Shift Captain, entrusted with leading field operations.

The retirement of seasoned staff members Mark Zimmerman and Eddie Martin marked the end of admirable careers, but their collective experience has been complemented by strategic new hires. Robert Negron, with a background in the NYPD, joined as a detective, bringing valuable insights. Nathan Dotson, formerly a Lexington County fire engineer, and Dennis Siudut, previously a Richland County deputy and firefighter, also joined the department, adding their diverse expertise to the team.



## NEW INITIATIVES



### K9 Investigation Division

*In an ongoing effort to keep CAE safe and secure for its passengers and staff, the CAE DPS incorporated a K9 Division in early 2023. Currently utilizing the support of two K9s, these highly trained members of the team are used to identify any possible threats or illegible substances.*

***Captain Mickey Cooke***

### Bike Patrol

CAE DPS started the bicycle program with a focus on increasing our visual presence across the airport campus and having quicker response times to incidents. This program also allows our officers to easily engage with the public and passengers in a more approachable manner. As an added benefit and something we have come to enjoy, being on a bike allows for built-in exercise while on patrol.



# MARKETING & AIR SERVICE DEVELOPMENT



*The marketing team at CAE dedicates itself to enhancing the airport's overarching brand recognition through a blend of events, strategic media relations, digital marketing, and social media engagement.*

*In 2023, the team successfully executed numerous initiatives, all centered around elevating the CAE brand, fostering loyalty, and urging both current and prospective passengers to consistently choose CAE for an unparalleled experience.*

**Kim J. Crafton**

*Vice President of Marketing & Air Service Development*



*Concert on the Runway - Columbia Food & Wine 2023.  
Photo by Forrest Clonts*

# INITIATIVES & PARTNERSHIPS

## Art in the Airport

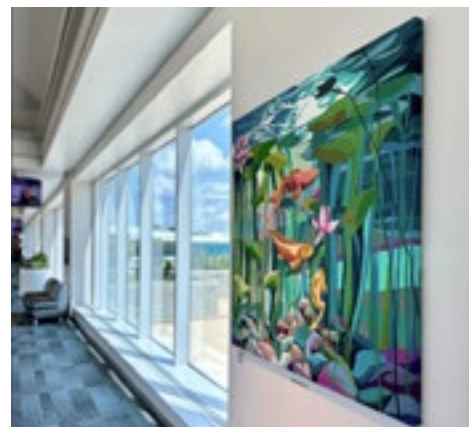
CAE's "Art in the Airport" program enhances travelers' experience while showcasing works of art created by artists right here in the Midlands. In addition to hosting multiple receptions to celebrate the artists' exhibits, the marketing team regularly shared their work on social media and in news releases – garnering a lot of media coverage.

## CAEnines Program

In 2023 CAE relaunched its in-terminal therapy dog program and renamed it, CAEnines! This popular program was offline for some time due to COVID-19 restrictions, but was reinstated with 12 trained therapy dogs regularly present in the terminal for passengers to enjoy.

## Concert on the Runway

In partnership with the Columbia Food & Wine Festival and in an effort to connect with the community in a fun and vibrant way, CAE hosted a Concert on the Runway. While multiple bands played, attendees enjoyed food and beverages from Midlands area food trucks. The event hit high note after high note with numerous aircrafts taking off and landing in the background. It was truly a night to remember.



## The Official Airport of the Gamecocks

CAE has partnered with University of South Carolina Athletics Department to become "The Official Airport of the Gamecocks." Travelers from around the world can now get to Gamecock Country with ease.



*We are proud to call the Columbia Metropolitan Airport the Official Airport of the Gamecocks. We appreciate their support as fans make their way to our campus for Gamecock sporting events.*

### Ray Tanner

*University of South Carolina Athletics Director*

## Steel Hands IPA

Steel Hands Brewing teamed up with CAE to take their Summer Ambassador program to extreme altitudes.



*The team at CAE is always looking for unique and creative ways to amplify our message in the community about our air service opportunities and the importance of flying local. This collaboration aligned perfectly with our push to increase brand awareness.*

### Samantha Kingsmore

*Marketing Manager*



## Shop CAE

The CAE online store got new items this year. By taking advantage of the online store run by CAE's marketing team, patrons can wear CAE's products with pride and further extend CAE's brand reach.

## Suprise + Delight

"Thank you for flying local!" Recognizing and surprising our passengers with food, beverage and swag as a "thank you" for flying local was a fun and interactive way to connect with our passengers and make them aware of how thankful we are they chose to fly local. This was the first of many Surprise & Delights CAE plans to do in 2024.



## TARGETED MARKETING EFFORTS

### Check CAE First | TV Commercial

With the last CAE commercial produced in 2019, it was time for refreshed content. The CAE Marketing team enlisted the talents and expertise of OTR Media, led by longtime Columbia based filmmaker, producer, former radio host and cinematic guru, Sherard Duvall. The commercial began running across the Midlands in November of 2023.



### FlyMyAirport™

CAE added a new software to its website that allows passengers to search and book flights, hotels, rental cars and explore travel packages all from FlyCAE.com. The search feature, the first product from the parent company AirportOne™, encourages the local community to support local, by flying local in a fun and clever way. The starting desintation remains on Columbia, SC – so anyone looking to book will start their trip in their own backyard.



### 26,320 Newsletters Subscribers

The average open rate in 2023 is **31.96%**.

**Highest open rate yet: 52.7%**  
(August 2023 newsletter)

**10% higher than the national average!**

ACI-NA MarComm Finalist for **Best Digital Newsletter** among airports nationwide.

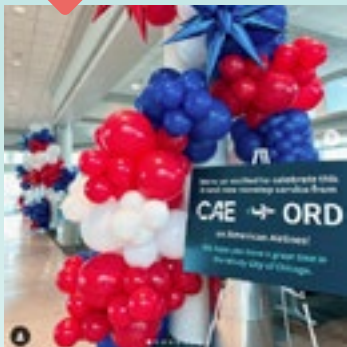
# INSTAGRAM TOP POST



## VALENTINE'S DAY GIVEAWAY

**10,082** Impressions  
**8,432** Accounts Reached  
**1,969** Engagements

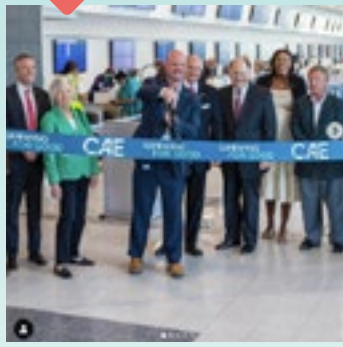
### Other High-Performing Posts



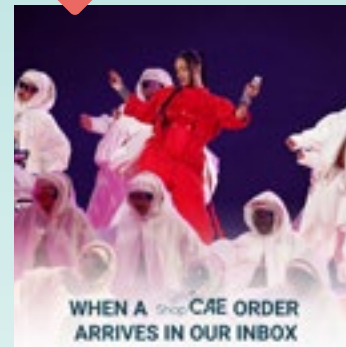
New Route Celebration



UGC "Prom-posal"



SC Aviation Week Press Conference with Gov. Henry McMaster



Pop Culture Meme

### SOMETHING COOL WE TRIED FOR THE FIRST TIME:

A series of airport-related March Madness posts that got TONS of engagement – even from other airports!



# STATS



Followers: 6,512  
757 new followers

+13.2%



Followers: 17,066  
1,045 new followers

+6.5%



Followers: 1,421  
124 new followers

+9.7%



Followers: 4,562  
217 new followers

+5.0%



## FACEBOOK TOP POST

Reached nearly **70,000** Accounts (69,874)  
Over **6,000** Engagements (6,005)  
**This was all organic!**



# AIR SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

## Shaping the Future of Air Service

As part of our efforts to make travel more accessible and attract low-cost carriers, CAE drafted and submitted a grant application through the Department of Transportation's Small Community Air Service Development program for the first time in our history.

Although CAE was not awarded a grant this year, it was a great opportunity for the airport to practice pulling support from the entire region through financial pledges, in-kind marketing support, and numerous letters of support for the airport and the potential new service.

*This was more than a grant application; it was a testament to shared aspirations.*

Attracting a low-cost carrier remained a priority of the department. Throughout the year, numerous in-person and tele-meetings were held with airlines that CAE currently does not have on their roster including Avelo Airlines, Breeze Airways, and Allegiant Airlines.

Additionally, regular meetings and calls were held with our legacy airlines, American Airlines, Delta Airlines, and United Airlines, fueling the collective dream that propels us skyward.



## Increasing Opportunities

Our team attended several conferences that provided in-depth knowledge on industry trends and air service, enabling us to expand our expertise and connect with industry leaders.



## NEW & EXPANDED SERVICES

Additional routes increase connectivity, resulting in growth and development not only for CAE, but also for the community.

### American Airlines

- New Nonstop Service to ORD – July 2023
- Returned Service to MIA (seasonal) – June 2023
- Returned Service to LGA – May 2023

### Delta Airlines

- Added Second Non-Stop to LGA – July 2023



*The addition of American Airlines routes shows the confidence the airline has in this market, as well as the active response from the community in continuing to utilize this airport and its airline’s route offerings.*

**Kim J. Crafton**

Vice President of Marketing & Air Service Development

# PLANNING, FACILITIES, & ENGINEERING





*2023 saw CAE reach a major milestone in its preparations for the future with the completion of a state-of-the-art TSA baggage screening facility, the implementation of common use technology, and the renewal of the various stores and restaurants. These were necessary steps for continued growth and addition of new air service.*

**Frank Murray**

*Vice President of Planning, Facilities & Engineering*



# CHECKED BAGGAGE INSPECTION SYSTEM & WEST TICKETING IMPROVMENTS

The spring saw the new checked baggage inspection systems go into full operation, alongside the new Self Check-in technology. These new systems allowed the airport to comfortably handle an average of 54,000 enplaned passengers each month through the summer season. This period saw some of the highest peak hour traffic numbers in airport history. Effective coordination between CAE, TSA, and the airlines combined to provide an easy customer experience throughout.



# CAMPUS-WIDE INDUSTRIAL PARK DEVELOPMENT

Magnus Development Partners constructed their first two buildings in the 803 Industrial Park, leasing their 250,000 SF “Gateway 3” building to Givens (3rd Party Logistics), and 50,000 SF of “Gateway 1” to Mattress Warehouse. Construction of the Airport Expressway Extension into the park is ongoing.

The new traffic signal at the entrance into CAE Enterprise Park was added in collaboration with Lexington County and SCDOT. Lexington County contributed \$125,000 to the project, while Scannell Properties contributed \$125,000 as part of an agreement to connect into the CAE Enterprise Park road system and join the park owners’ association.



The improved access provides safer, more efficient access for all park users, and raises the value of the remaining parcels for sale/lease.

CAE is working with SC Department of Commerce and Lexington County to create multiple Certified Sites for Aeronautical/Non-Aeronautical Revenue generation and regional economic development.



## U.S. CUSTOMS & BORDER PROTECTION (CBP)

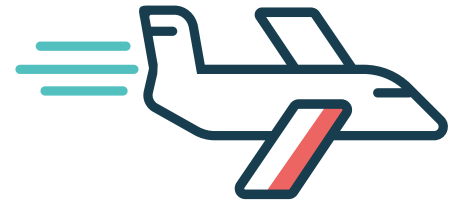
Powered By CAE is a leasing and land development program that provides the framework and vision for an unmatched commercial community that is a part of the Columbia Metropolitan Airport.

CAE owns and manages over 2,500 acres of land containing approximately 1.2 million square feet of facilities. In addition to those assets necessary to directly support air services needs of our region, CAE also offers a variety of commercial leasing and land development opportunities that will continue to fuel economic growth and development throughout the region.

The airport is working on upgrading its CBP facility to meet Federal Inspection Station (FIS) requirements and expand the airport’s outreach for potential Air Cargo, General Aviation, and Maintenance, Repair, Overhaul (MRO) opportunities. The facility will be installed in a building formerly utilized by FAA. The project is being funded through support from SC Aeronautics and the FAA. The airport has also presented part of the building as a potential incubator/office location for Advanced Mobility coordination in South Carolina.

## TAXIWAY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

CAE is about to embark on a multi-year program to reconfigure parts of the airfield to better suit its larger aircraft needs. The program will restore aged asphalt pavements, realign some taxiways to bring them up to new FAA standards, resolve some “hot spots,” and add pavement and paved shoulders to accommodate larger cargo aircraft (Boeing 747-8) parking and movements. The program has been approved and discretionary funding is being lined up by FAA to accomplish the various phases over the next four years.



## TSA CHECKPOINT MODERNIZATION PROJECT

The airport was awarded \$6 million for the Checkpoint Modernization Project through the FAA’s BIL Airport Terminals Program. TSA has since committed to upgrading the checkpoint equipment to provide four complete screening lanes by the conclusion of the project, since CAE will now have space to receive their upgraded technology.

# OPERATIONS





*The Operations Department successfully managed a number of extraordinary circumstances this year — making it one for the record books. Our team dealt with a terminal power outage, overturned aircraft, a large international diversion, in-line baggage system outages and so much more. Even with these challenging situations, we worked as a cohesive unit and incorporated the years of training to ensure the airport, staff and passengers all remained safe and protected during each event.*

**Ryan Kreulen**

*Vice President of Operations*

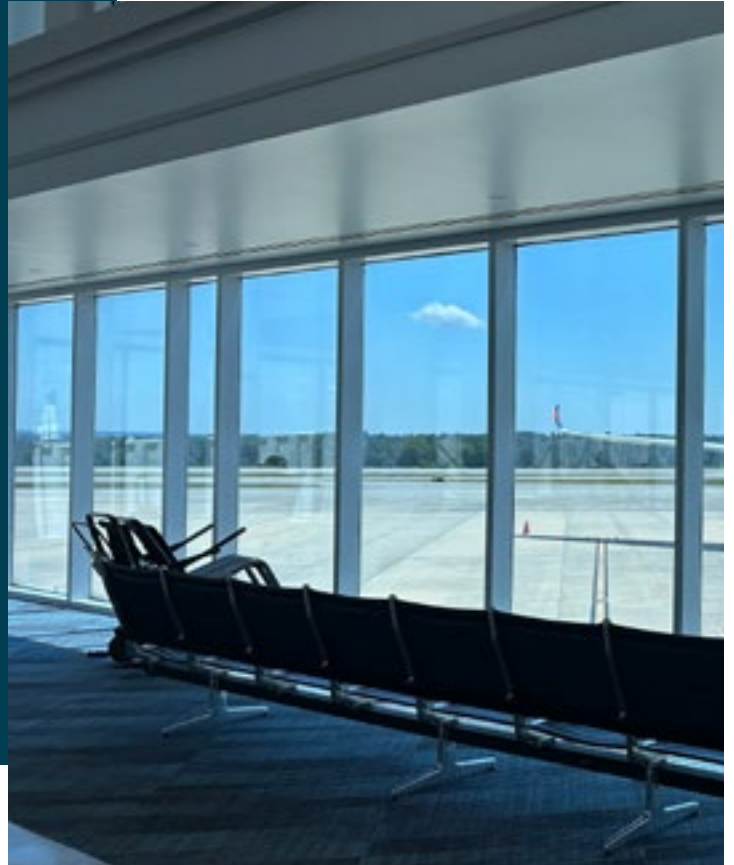


*International Delta Air Lines flight diverted to CAE en route from Tokyo to Atlanta, June 26th, 2023.*

# OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT ACHIEVEMENTS

The Operations Department serves as the “eyes and ears” of the airport – ensuring all areas, personnel, aircraft, airlines and more are operating correctly, safely and within protocol. The team tasked with this duty at CAE is small, but mighty. This year, a number of team members successfully completed accreditations, certifications and continuing education courses all in an effort to advance their overall knowledge of the aviation industry and ways of working at CAE.

Kevin Chang and Timothy Holzer both completed their Certified Member (C.M.) through American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE), while the entire department completed National Incident Management System (NIMS) training. Additionally, the department secured a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Part 107 drone operator license.





# TERMINAL SUPPORT

## Cleaning Robot

Earlier this year, the Terminal Support team incorporated an innovative new cleaning device into their systems. “Powered by Avidbots Autonomy Neo delivers a fully autonomous clean while handling environment changes with ease.” Every year, passengers compliment the cleanliness of the airport and with this additional support of this new robot, the team will be able to continue providing top-notch service and care to the airport. As a three-time, GBAC Star accredited airport, CAE remains at the top of the industry for ensuring a safe and clean travel experience.



## Aunt Flow®

CAE became a proud partner with Aunt Flow, a company that provides free period products in businesses and schools. The airport installed these dispensers in the women’s restrooms throughout the terminal in an effort to support our traveling public.



## Professional Development

Terminal Support Manager, Lakisha Darby, and Kaylynn Jackson attended the ISSA Show North American Exhibition and Conference – the leading trade association for the cleaning industry worldwide that brings together executives and leaders from all commercial and residential cleaning industry segments – to connect with peers on best practices in new cleaning standards, to better understand environmental and human health concerns, and to see innovative advancements in touchless, commercial cleaning opportunities.





# GIVES BACK

**CAE Gives Back. It's more than just a concept, a feel-good statement, or a catchy tagline. It's a way of life for the staff at CAE. This year, CAE team members worked to make meaningful connections throughout the community that would be seen and felt for years to come.**

## ***This is how CAE Gives Back.***

For the past several years, CAE colleagues have been seeking opportunities to get outside of the airport and into the community to support local organizations, charities and causes that will have a lasting impact on the people and families of this region. This year, one such organization the CAE team worked with was Mission Lexington.

Team members from CAE collected items for months ahead of the Mission Lexington school supply drive and then served as volunteer workers at the event. The team spent the day passing out backpacks filled with pens, notebooks, scissors, glue sticks, packs of paper, binders, and markers. This opportunity allowed staff members to directly connect and interact with families in need within the community the importance of giving back as one unified team.



Other noteworthy efforts CAE staff participated in this year were with Families Helping Families (an opportunity in which CAE staff members adopted a local family during the holidays) as well as the Cayce West Columbia Rotary Club's annual back to school supply drive. This drive donated items to several area organizations and schools including Sister Care, Herbert A Wood Elementary, Orangeburg-Wilkinson High School, and Richland School District 2.

***"Serving alongside my fellow colleagues is a joy and a pleasure," said Lakisha Darby, Terminal Support Manager. "We say and fully believe that we're a team inside and outside of the airport. To be able to support and care for our community together, as a team, has been the highlight of my time working here at CAE."***

Another important effort Team CAE championed this year was the annual Wings for All® event — hosted in partnership with The Arc of South Carolina, The Arc of the US, Delta Air Lines, and Enterprise Holdings. This event allows individuals with autism and other intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), along with their families, to rehearse the airport experience and board an airplane — many for the first time.

This was the second year CAE has participated as a host airport, and it certainly won't be the last.





In addition to supporting human wellness organizations, Team CAE also partnered with area schools, sharing valuable insights, information, and knowledge with students about the benefits of careers within the aviation industry.

As a member of the Midlands Education & Business Alliance (MEBA), the team conducted preliminary, on the spot interviews as a practice with graduating seniors looking to soon secure full-time employment in the workforce.

Team members also participated in MEBA's annual Creating Career Connections conference in which Midland's educators heard from industry professionals about career opportunities, advice, and resources. Shonda Lucky, CAE's Human Resources manager, attended a number of MEBA-supported events and programming at area schools and even served as a keynote speaker at this conference.

***"Having the opportunity to share something I'm passionate about with students in the community, as a representative of Columbia Metropolitan Airport, is a point of pride for me," said Lucky. "I enjoy making them aware of the numerous career possibilities within the aviation space – most of which they haven't thought about or knew were even options."***



Finally, as a special highlight – a team member who represents the airport well while here and within the community. A team member who understands the importance of giving back and does so whenever he can.

Xavier Davis with the maintenance department was invited to the career day at Hopkins Elementary School. Xavier was, himself, a student at Hopkins several years ago. On career day, Xavier shared with the students details about his career and even brought props to get them excited and engaged in the subject matter. Returning to the school where he was once a student, now speaking as a professional on career day was a moment of great reflection, meaning and joy for Xavier.

***"I always look for opportunities to share what I love doing every day," said Davis. "And being invited back to the school I attended is extra icing on the cake. I wear my CAE badge proudly and am thankful for the opportunity to give back in this way."***



# PROPERTIES & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



*Across the airport campus, we continue to foster all development opportunities to not only strengthen the airport, but the entire Midlands region.*

**Lindsay Copelan**  
Properties Manager



*Photo by Forrest Clonts*

## FOREIGN-TRADE ZONE

A Foreign-Trade Zone is a designated location in the United States where companies can use special customs procedures that help encourage activity and level the playing field with foreign competitors. This stimulation of international trade creates jobs and investments within the United States rather than abroad.

Serving as the grantee for Foreign-Trade Zone 127, CAE oversees the idlands territory and its operations dealings. Centrally located in the state, FTZ 127 can provide a flexible, streamlined process to get into the zone.

The ability to obtain Customs duty and logistics/administrative savings in today's competitive global trading environment represents a critical business and economic development incentive for the Midlands region.

Organized under the Alternative Site Framework program, this allows businesses to obtain FTZ designation and activation anywhere within the 16-county region. The 16 counties include Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun, Clarendon, Edgefield, Fairfield, Kershaw, Lee, Lexington, McCormack, Newberry, Richland, Saluda and Sumter.



## AIRPORT COMMERCE CENTER

Airport Commerce Center (ACC) is a three-building single story office and flex/warehouse property that totals 87,323 SF. The property is easily accessible via Interstate 26, Interstate 20, and Interstate 77. Through lease extensions and renewals from current tenants, the ACC kept continued to grow throughout 2023 and is on track to be 100% occupied in 2024.



## CONCESSIONS ENHANCEMENTS

In 2023 CAE started a multi-phased effort to revamp its food, beverage, and retail operations across the airport. As part of the updates, Carolina Concessions, LLC, CAE's contracted food and beverage concessionaire, opened Jimmy John's and Samuel Adams Brewhouse Columbia in the former Carolina Subs and Riverbanks Bar & Grill locations. Additionally, the Sunrise Café was converted into a Dunkin'® – serving the chain's signature doughnuts, coffee and breakfast sandwiches.

The Friendly Caterer To-Go – a concept based on Carolina Concessions' sister catering business The Friendly Caterer that specializes in to-go family meals – will be located in the main lobby; the landside of the airport. This location broke ground earlier this year and is slated to be completed by Q2 2024.

Paradies Lagardère, CAE's contracted retail provider, started work to transform their current retail offerings, transitioning the Capital Marketplace to Vista Trading offering grab-n-go snacks and travel essentials. The Three Rivers Collection will be in the main lobby pre-security and include a hybrid of travel essentials and branded "shop in shops" with Avanti Markets vending machines in the former PGA Tour Shops portion of the store. The Columbia Travelmart will become Explore Columbia and include a local marketplace concept with products from Midland's area vendors. Currently, the estimated completion for all concepts is winter 2024.



# FINANCE



*2023 was an overall healthy and profitable year for CAE. With considerable debt paid down, new, renegotiated airline/airport agreements in place, increased passenger traffic YOY and achieving a substantially high percentage of DBE participation with 47 different vendors, this year, by in large, was one of significant promise for continued success in the future.*

**Gregg Hornsby**

*Vice President of Finance & Administration*



A large, white, blocky wall serves as a backdrop for the airport's name. The text is rendered in a bold, teal, 3D sans-serif font. The word 'COLUMBIA' is on the top line, and 'METROPOLITAN AIRPORT' is on the bottom line. The letters cast soft shadows to the right. The wall is set against a clear blue sky and green trees. The foreground consists of dark gravel.

**COLUMBIA**  
**METROPOLITAN AIRPORT**



# THIS YEAR BY THE NUMBERS

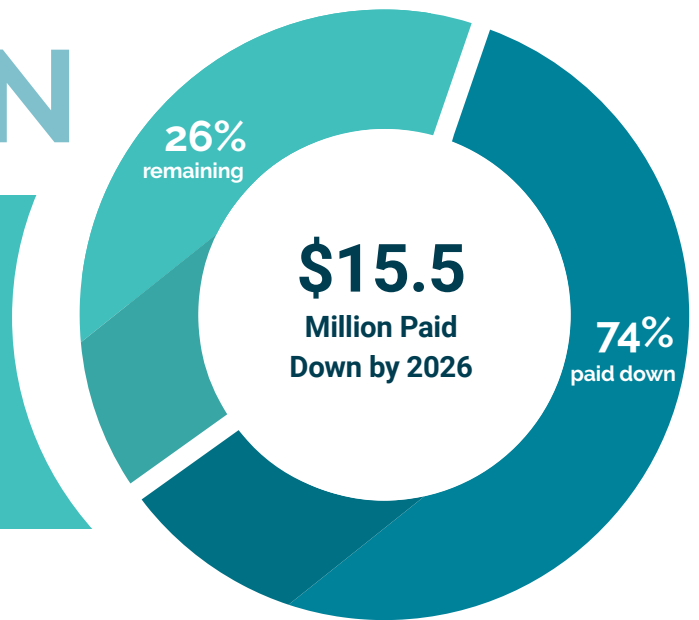


## \$7.3 MILLION

Used **\$7.3 million** in American Resecure Plan Act (ARPA) funds through October 2023 to reimburse the airport for salaries and benefits expenses.

## \$4.1 MILLION

**Paid down \$4.1 million** of outstanding debt in 2023, and increased borrowing for the CBIS West Ticketing project by \$1.2 million for a current debt balance of \$21.0 million. **\$15.5 million (74%) of the current balance will be paid down by 2026.**



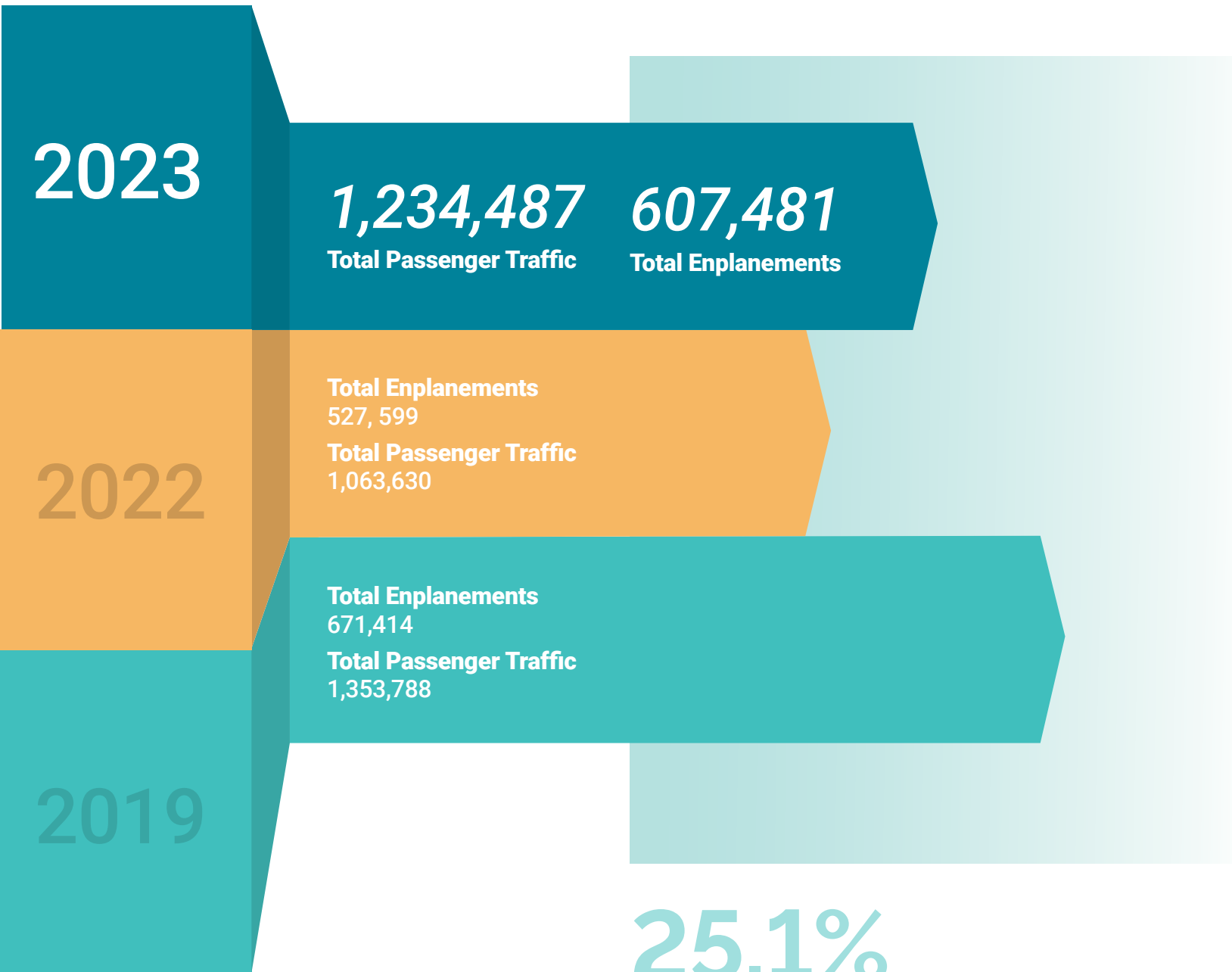
## \$23.9 MILLION

Completed **\$23.9 million of the Consolidated Baggage Inspection System ("CBIS") West Ticketing project**, which is financed with federal grants (Federal Aviation Administration and Transportation Security Administration), and \$10.8 million of financing for the locally funded portion of the project.

# IN REGARD TO THE AIRPORT CAMPUS & ITS DIVERSITY EFFORTS, CAE:



Saw improved passenger traffic throughout the year. The total number of departing and arriving passengers through December 2023 was 16% more than December 2022, and was 91% of the same timeframe in 2019.



# 25.1%

CAE staff renegotiated the Airline-Airport Use Agreements with the five signatory carriers to address operational changes associated with airport-owned equipment (ex: jet bridges, ticketing equipment, CBIS, etc.). There was also contractual accommodation for prospective low-cost carriers to serve the airport in the future.

**Achieved a 25.1% Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) participation** with 47 different vendors through December 2023 on locally funded operating expenses and capital projects.

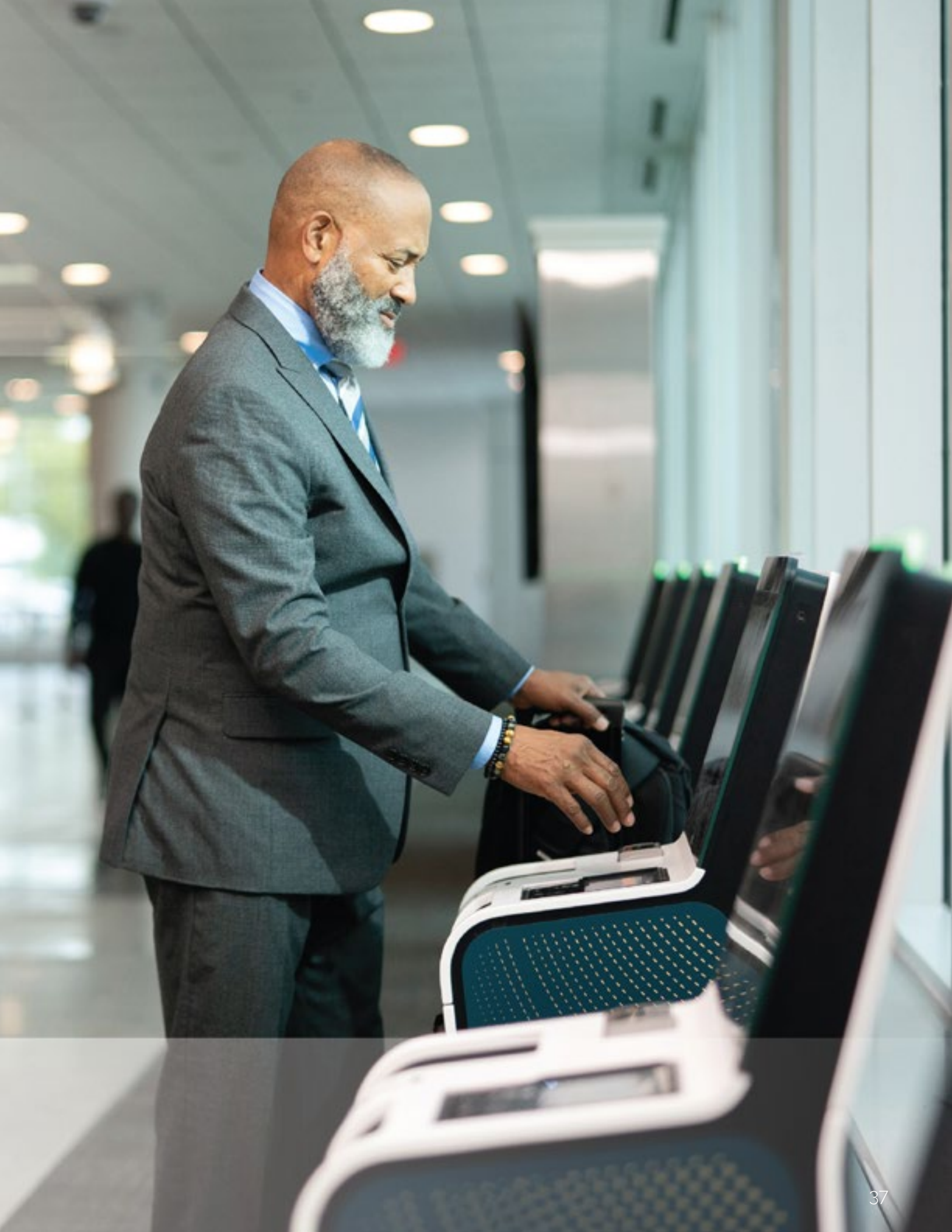
# INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY



*Proactively incorporating state-of-the-art technology solutions throughout the airport is a priority for CAE. We want efficient operations and systems in place throughout the terminal that will allow for our passengers to have a seamless, intuitive experience from garage to gate.*

**Joel Livingston**

*Director of Information Technology (IT)*



# AIRPORT TECHNOLOGY UPGRADES

Across the airport technology upgrades, updates and enhancements were made to make processes and systems touchless, touchscreen or digital. In baggage claim, CAE moved from dated static graphics displays for its indoor advertising to digital displays. On each of the three baggage carousels, CAE, with support from The Office People, installed new high resolution digital displays – two large displays and four small displays on each carousel.

The digital updates in baggage claim allow for increased non-aeronautical revenue as more advertisers can be on display at any given time. These enhancements are part of a larger technology plan and will expand to include areas of opportunity on the airside in 2024.



## PARK MOBILE

CAE launched a new parking capability called ParkMobile. This mobile application can be downloaded and saved on any mobile device. Within the app, customers will then upload credit card information and payment will be handled automatically at entry into a lot. At the conclusion of a trip, a QR code will be sent to the mobile device with a QR code indicating payment has cleared. The app will also store all receipts and past transactions, making recall of needed information ease and convenient.

# MESSAGE FROM CAE COMMISSIONERS



***For continued success over the next three years, CAE will need to...***



"... continue incorporating innovative technology that will not only move the airport forward, but will make air travel easy, quick, and convenient for our community."

**Dan P. Bell**



"... keep investing in its team members and community through professional development workshops and community partnerships that allow for diverse participation in projects large and small."

**Chappelle Broome-Stevenson**



"... continue strategically marketing the airport to our region in an effort to capture as many passengers as possible, which will inevitably strengthen our annual enplanement numbers."

**LaJoia Broughton**



"... secure additional air service — both airline carriers and routes — to provide even greater air travel offerings to our community."

**Duane Cooper**



"... keep exploring economic development opportunities across the airport campus that position the airport for future success and financial stability."

**Johnny Folsom**



"... be persistent in always learning and understanding their passenger base — their needs, their desires, and their interests — to not only capture them for one trip, but for all trips; making CAE their go-to airport."

**Anton Gunn**



"... examine opportunities to increase its overall cargo operation, reestablishing CAE's number one position in the state, while bolstering this revenue stream for the airport."

**Hank Jibaja**



"... remain financially solvent with a laser focus on continuing to pay down debt while decreasing the airports CPE (cost per enplanement) — a major determining factor of low-cost carriers."

**Tripp Jones, M.D.**



"... ensure our community at large — including our state and local officials — understand the importance of utilizing this airport. Flying local isn't just a tag line, it should be a way of life for those who choose air travel in our region."

**Pat G. Smith**



"... strategically begin implementing those pieces of the Airport Master Plan where able — enabling growth and development to happen as soon as possible for CAE and the entire airport campus."

**Breon Walker, Esq.**



"...ensure that its strong community engagement remains a top priority — investing in partnerships, community events, collaborations, and educational opportunities as often as possible."

**James "Jim" C. Wellman**



## **Message From Richland-Lexington Airport District's Chairwoman Carol Fowler**

Over the last few years, it has been exciting to watch the significant momentum the Columbia Metropolitan Airport has made across this airport campus, inside the terminal and within the community.

While my fellow commissioners and I have the pleasure of hearing from the CAE team on a regular basis regarding new projects and updates on upcoming initiatives, it's important we communicate to the entire community the

significant and meaningful impact this airport has, and continues to have, on the Midlands region.

From community partnerships that allow for the joining of efforts toward a common goal, to a concerted focus on increasing air service on our current airline carriers and beginning work on a multi-phased Airport Master Plan, CAE is moving forward in strategic ways that will positively affect the region.

These ongoing efforts will set the stage for innovation and overall advancement in the future that will have a direct impact on our valued passengers.



**CAE**  
*fly with ease*

