

# Annual Report

*Progress + Service 24 Hours a Day*

# 2011



  
**Asheville**  
REGIONAL AIRPORT  
Take the easy way out.

Asheville Regional Airport: *Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2011*



**Airports are fast-paced, always in motion, ever-evolving to keep pace** with customer needs and changes in the airline industry. Comprised primarily of a runway, a terminal building, a public safety facility, and a bevy of additional buildings and parking lots, an airport is an important infrastructure where many independent businesses operate. These businesses are our partners in the quest to serve the air traveler, and while the airlines are our most recognized partners, our customers are also served by others like general aviation providers, concessionaires, rental car operators, the FAA and the TSA.

We work in tandem — and make plans together — all with the goal of ensuring that our community’s air travel needs are met.

Certainly, airports are hubs of activity around-the-clock, every day of the year. And 2011 at Asheville Regional Airport is no exception. 2011 was a year of growth and change. It was a year of long-term planning, and a time for more immediate opportunity. What’s more, 2011 was the airport’s 50th year of serving Western North Carolina, a milestone with a hefty “umph” that reminds us of the foresight of long ago leaders, and of the responsibility on our shoulders to diligently plan for the next 50 years.

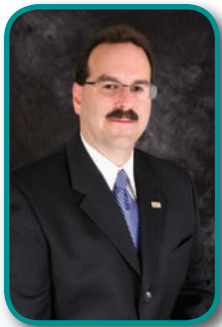
The hub of excitement ever-present at our airport symbolizes the importance of Asheville Regional Airport to the vitality of our region. We welcome travelers to our beautiful mountains every day, and we usher our friends and neighbors to the far reaches of the world and back home again. More and more travelers are passing through our doors, and we’re ready to welcome them.

There is much to highlight about our 50th year, and we’ve chosen to share the most noteworthy accomplishments in a unique way. Join us on a 24/7, 365-day journey at Asheville Regional Airport, enjoy a recap of accomplishments, and try to imagine what is yet to come.

Regards,

Lew Bleiweis, A.A.E., Airport Director

David Hillier, Chairman, Airport Authority Board





**JANUARY 8, 2011 3:15 A.M.**

**Snow!** (Not a favorite word at an airport, but one that enters our world somewhat frequently in Western North Carolina...) And the snow-removal crew at Asheville Regional Airport is alert and ready each time the “white stuff” is predicted to fall. January 2011 brings about a foot of snow, and on this morning, the snow plows are in full gear, as they have been all night long, while most of Western North Carolina is still sleeping. Passengers have paid their hard-earned dollars to fly to and from AVL, and air travel must go on!



**JANUARY 17, 2011 4:20 A.M.**

It’s early in the morning on a chilly January day. Passengers are arriving to catch the 5:30 a.m. US Airways flight to Charlotte. On this morning, a **more spacious and renovated security area** is open, and smiling Transportation Security Administration officers are welcoming travelers through. As one of the first completed areas of the terminal renovation project, the new TSA screening line gives passengers a sneak peek at how inviting the renovated terminal will be.

**FEBRUARY 11, 2011 8:00 A.M.**

The Asheville Regional Airport Authority board meeting commences soon with exciting news: The numbers are in, and **AVL served a record number of passengers in 2010 — up 27% from the previous year.** Nearly three quarters of a million passengers were served, now **reclassifying AVL as a “small hub” airport.** This distinction is one validation of the strength of WNC and the airport’s contribution to a strong economy in the region.



FEBRUARY 14, 2011 8:05 A.M.

It's Valentine's Day, and the airport is "sharing the love" in a new way: The airport's website [[flyavl.com](http://flyavl.com)] has been redesigned, and **an advertising campaign is launched** with the passenger's ease of use in mind.

In fact, the airport's new slogan — *Take the easy way out* — is prominently displayed in all materials, a true statement about the ease and convenience experienced when flying from AVL.

FEBRUARY 20, 2011 8:45 A.M.

"Our seats are in an upright and eco-friendly position," reads a sign adjacent to the new gate hold area at Asheville Regional Airport.

**The airport replaces its passenger seating with new chairs that are the first of their kind in American airports.**

The 100% recyclable seating is made with metal replacement technology, which uses much less energy than steel manufacturing. The environmentally-friendly manufacturing process is appealing to the airport, which is working to implement a more "green" environment over time.



**Our seats are in an upright and eco-friendly position.**

(Produced using less energy than steel manufacturing, 100% recyclable materials, and darn good looking, too.)





MARCH 1, 2011

9:00 A.M.



Another milestone for Asheville Regional Airport in full swing!  
**The Blue Ridge Tavern opens at AVL** — the very first restaurant operated by The Paradies Shops, a nationally acclaimed and award-winning airport concessionaire.

When Paradies began looking for an airport in which to launch their first restaurant, Asheville was a perfect fit. Laden with local food (much of which is farm-to-table from WNC), a menu created by consulting chef Anthony Cerrato of Asheville's own Fiore's

Ristorante Toscana, as well as our area's beer and wine (yep, we've got Highland, Green Man, Asheville Brewing Company, Duck Rabbit and French Broad brews, as well as Biltmore wines), the new tavern offers a dining experience not often found in an airport. On this morning, passengers begin enjoying this special place, which also includes a panoramic view of the runway and mountains.



MARCH 7, 2011

9:17 A.M.

**Housekeeping and maintenance crews have been hard at work for hours already.** The streets have been swept, restrooms cleaned, floors buffed, and there is more yet to accomplish. Our passenger surveys show that we are ranked extraordinarily high as a clean and welcoming airport, due largely to the daily work of this dedicated team of professionals.



**super-  
clean!**

MARCH 11, 2011

9:53 A.M.

The tables are in place, ready for 300 guests. A flurry of activity is occurring in the midst of the brand new gate hold area — the main part of the terminal renovation project. Tonight, two area Chambers of Commerce (Asheville and Hendersonville) will partner with the airport to host a joint **Business After Hours event**

**to commemorate the completion of the new gates, restaurant and security area.**

The evening will also be the first of several celebrations in honor of the airport's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.



**Asheville**  
REGIONAL AIRPORT  
Take the easy way out.



APRIL 12, 2011 10:00 A.M.

The awards are in at the Southeast Chapter of the American Association of Airport Executives... and **Asheville Regional Airport is the winner of the “Best General Aviation Project” in the Southeast region.** AVL is recognized for its creative use of a regional partnership to efficiently, effectively and safely conduct a **major fill project that created 15 usable acres of aeronautical-use land on the airport campus,** on the north side, near Interstate 26. The fill project combined the resources and talents of multiple organizations to design and undertake an EPA-encouraged beneficial use program utilizing coal combustion by-products (called CCBs) for engineered-fill material. The project allowed the airport to import 840,000 cubic yards of CCBs from the nearby Progress Energy electric-generating plant. This eliminated the need to utilize the earth’s natural resources while creating the additional acres of buildable land — all at a significant cost savings to the airport.



APRIL 15, 2011 10:10 A.M.

The airport director signs a **contract for the design of a new public safety facility** — a goal that has been on the capital plan for many years. The current facility, now more than 30 years old, was not designed with a post-9-11 public safety department in mind. We now have more sophisticated — and bigger — equipment that cannot be housed in the facility. In addition, our team has grown as our airport has grown. It’s a positive step to head into design; we are now one step closer to this needed enhancement at the airport.



MAY 1, 2011

10:30 A.M.

The giant dump trucks rarely stop, as they go back and forth between the Progress Energy Plant near Long Shoals Road, and the southwest side of the airfield.

**Another fill project is underway**, and by 2013, the airport will have level land adjacent to the runway suitable for aeronautical development, which could include the future addition of air cargo services at AVL.



MAY 14, 2011

10:47 A.M.

After a morning that includes a patriotic send-off, we settle into the normal routine of the day, anxiously anticipating the return of the World War II soldiers on the **very last HonorAir flight from AVL**. It is a bittersweet day. HonorAir, a program started by WNC resident Jeff Miller, flew its first plane full of veterans to the nation's capital from Asheville Regional Airport. Flights now take place nationwide, with the goal of escorting every WWII veteran who is able to Washington, D.C. to view the WWII Memorial and be recognized for their service to our country. Most WWII veterans in WNC have been able to participate, and today the last WNC group enjoys this honor.



MAY 20, 2011

11:05 A.M.

There are many reasons why air travel is the safest form of transportation, one of which is the industry's diligence in planning for all potential "what if's." On this sunny day, the area's public safety leaders are wrapping up an important **table-top disaster drill**. "Mutual aid" is a common theme, and Western North Carolina fire, police and emergency medical personnel are ready to act as a unified team in the event of an emergency at the airport.



**Asheville**  
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Take the easy way out.



JUNE 7, 2011

11:10 A.M.

Today marks **AVL's 50th anniversary!** To celebrate and commemorate this milestone, a history exhibit opens in the airport's art gallery. Following a brief ceremony, passengers, board members, and friends of the airport take a "walk through the decades," viewing airport and airline historic memorabilia, as well as iconic pop culture images to set the tone for the past 50 years of history. Did you know that Elvis, Dolly Parton and Ronald Reagan are among the many celebrities and presidents who have flown through AVL?



JUNE 30, 2011

12:30 P.M.

You may not be able to see it from outer space, but the chalk art drawing near the runway is pretty impressive. A community partnership with chalk artists in the region results in a **50<sup>th</sup> anniversary mural on the ramp near the runway** and time-lapse video to document the unique event.



The chalk drawing also promoted an upcoming community festival called "Chalk it Up."



*Complimentary*

**Cell Phone  
Waiting Lot  
Now Open!**



JUNE 29, 2011

HIGH NOON

"Free?" Did you say, "free?" Why, dear passengers, yes we did! In an effort to provide excellent customer service, the **airport opens a complimentary cell phone waiting lot** for those who merely need a place to wait for an arriving passenger. The only rule: Drivers must stay in their cars to wait for a call from their passengers, and then circle around to pick them up at the curb. Now, that's a great gift!

JULY 31, 2011

1:25 P.M.

... 79,225... 79,226... The countdown is nearing completion to the **first month in AVL's history during which 80,000+ passengers were served.** July 2011 passenger traffic is up 3.7% over the previous year's record July.

**80,000 +**





*AUGUST 19, 2011 1:45 P.M.*

The report is in, following an extensive **environmental assessment of a proposed airfield redevelopment project** that could eventually result in a reconstructed runway at AVL. It's a good day — the assessment resulted in a finding of “no significant impact,” which is needed in order to move forward with the \$60 million project. The next steps will be to propose the project to the Federal Aviation Administration, and to request funding. This process will likely take years to complete.



*AUGUST 31, 2011 2:27 P.M.*

Upon approach to AVL, pilots now see what they may call a “pretty” runway — our **runway rejuvenation project** is complete. For about six weeks, the runway was closed at night for rubber removal; “rout and grout” to clean out and refill the cracks in the asphalt; installation of a protective sealant; and, finally, a fresh coat of paint. Whew! It was quite a process, with airport crews working hard during the wee hours of the night to complete the job as quickly as possible.

*AUGUST 24, 2011 1:54 P.M.*

What better place to contribute to a more “green” environment than Western North Carolina! On this hot summer day, fewer diesel emissions are being produced thanks to several **environmentally responsible equipment systems implemented** at AVL. New electric systems are in place — air conditioning units and a ground power system for planes parked at the gates, as well as three new electric belt loaders (used to load luggage onto the planes). We are glad to focus on areas where we can do what's better for the environment.



SEPTEMBER 19, 2011 2:58 P.M.

There always seems to be a **construction project** happening at all airports, and AVL is no exception! This afternoon, the carpet leading to **Gates 4-7** is gone, leaving a concrete floor that is now being prepared for installation of terrazzo flooring. This area of the terminal will soon match the newly constructed gate hold area, with similar colors and finishes. Goodbye, teal columns!



**Pardon  
our dust...**

We're working on making  
gates 4-7 as pretty as gates 1-3.

(And we promise to bring  
back the rocking chairs.)



SEPTEMBER 27, 2011 3:15 P.M.

Following a half-day “kick-off” meeting, the **airport master plan team begins the 18-month process of creating a new plan** to guide the growth and development activities

at the airport during the next 20 years. Some of the first steps include the development of a public website that will chronicle the process, identification of community leaders to include in the planning work, and gathering of historic data.

#### PLANNING + DEVELOPMENT

The Asheville Regional Airport last completed an airport master plan study in July, 2001. Soon after, changes in the aviation industry resulting from the events of 9/11 rendered that plan somewhat obsolete. Although a terminal area plan was completed in 2005 as an interim measure, it is time for the airport to undertake a new airport master plan study.





OCTOBER 1, 2011 4:17 P.M.

In honor of our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we invite the community to the airport for the very first **Runway 5K + Healthy Fun Day!** Several thousand people of all ages enjoy a morning next to the runway, commencing with 750 runners on the runway, followed by a festival with aircraft on display, music, food and a healthy lifestyle fair presented by our event sponsor, Mission Health.

The day is over, and would not have been possible without our community partners: Mission Health, Landmark Aviation, the Western North Carolina Pilot's Association, the WNC Agricultural Center, Clear Channel Radio, Mix 96.5, Windstream, Avcon and LPA Group.





**Thanks to hard-working staff from every department of the airport** — Operations and Maintenance, Custodial, Public Safety, Finance, Administration, Executive, Marketing, and Guest Services (whew!) — plus a handful of much-appreciated airport volunteers, the event was a huge success and plans are already underway for a second Runway 5k event in 2012!





OCTOBER 17, 2011

5:00 P.M.

After a week of preparation with the Secret Service, White House Staff and the U.S. Air Force, **Asheville Regional Airport is proud of its role in the President's visit to Western North Carolina.** Earlier today, Air Force One landed easily to deliver President Obama, who then jogged to a flag-draped stage near the airfield. Several thousand citizens greeted the Commander-in-chief, who gave a speech before boarding a bus for a southeastern tour. All in a day's work at AVL.







NOVEMBER 18, 2011 6:45 P.M.



The **inaugural Allegiant Air flight to Orlando** taxis down the runway, a 150-seat MD-80 with 146 passengers on board. It's always exciting to welcome a new airline to AVL, because it means enhanced air service for the residents of Western North Carolina. In 2011, we also welcomed a seasonal flight to Ft. Walton Beach on Vision Airlines, a new weekly flight to Philadelphia on US Airways, and we welcomed back the seasonal American Airlines flight to Dallas/Ft. Worth.

## Air Service Changes on the Horizon

An important piece of the airport's responsibility to the region is to stay abreast of what is happening in the airline industry, and maximize opportunity for sustained and new commercial routes. With the rise of jet fuel prices — one of the largest expenses associated with airline operations — airlines are focusing on new drivers of profitability. Gone are the days of prolific air service, regardless of an airline's ability to fill seats in their planes. Smaller, regional jets are also being phased out of some markets due to their fuel inefficiencies, and frequency of service is expected to decline over the next few years in many markets.

At the same time, new airline business models are emerging that point toward niche opportunities, such as Allegiant Travel Company's focus on point-to-point service to popular leisure markets.

As we forge ahead with air service development advocacy, our successes may come first in the form of preservation followed by growth — preservation of seats in the market, frequency of flights, and optimal timing of flight schedules to best serve the community's needs.

We'll also propose opportunities that are truly viable for the WNC market, and plant seeds for future growth. The growth of new service will most likely be slower than recently experienced, due largely to the slowing of the legacy airlines' domestic growth plans, but we know that there are several non-stop routes that could be very successful in our market. We'll focus on those (if you're curious, they include Washington, D.C., Ft. Lauderdale and Denver) and stay the course for the years it may take to attract these new services.

Asheville Regional Airport has seen unprecedented growth during the past two years; however, as the airline industry adjusts to economic pressures, airports — including AVL — will see changes, and must be poised to operate successfully in the new air service environment.

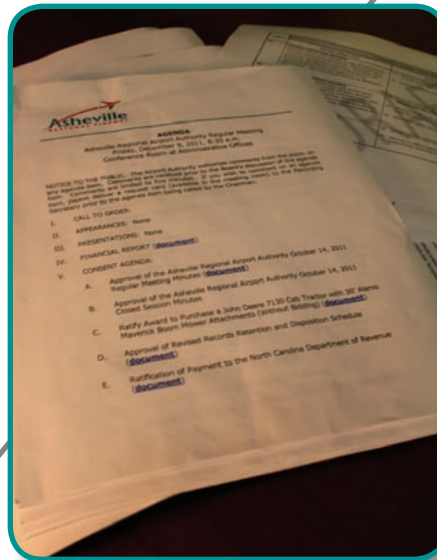




NOVEMBER 22, 2011 8:09 P.M.

A family with young children arrives at AVL, tired and ready to head home. Our Guest Services team is on-hand to assist, offering friendly smiles... and a much-needed luggage cart! Customer service is a primary focus for Asheville Regional Airport. In 2011, we implemented a **new business center, continued to offer free Wi-Fi for travelers, and reinstated a luggage cart rental program**

— all while assisting thousands of travelers with their questions and concerns.



DECEMBER 8, 2011 10:15 P.M.

The day's work nearly complete, the Airport Director studies documents for the next morning's board meeting. Of particular note, tomorrow the board will be asked to approve a **5-year, \$96 million capital improvement plan**. Airports across the country receive federal dollars each year for airport improvements. These funds — from the federal tax on airline tickets — are dispersed back to airports with the sole purpose of keeping the nation's air travel infrastructure operational and efficient.

DECEMBER 24, 2011 11:59 P.M.

Is that Santa's sleigh on approach to runway 34? No, it is a delayed flight (yes, these happen sometimes), landing with the assistance of our instrument landing system. **Can a plane land in the middle of the night at AVL? You betcha.** It is a common misperception that the runway closes after the FAA tower staff is off duty — not true! From about 11 p.m. to 5:30 a.m. each day, the AVL air space is controlled by the FAA in Atlanta, and pilots are able to communicate with air traffic controllers, turn on the runway lights with instrumentation in their planes, and use the instrument landing system, if needed. This is very common practice at many airports across the country, and works well for the occasional middle-of-the-night landing at AVL.



DECEMBER 29, 2011 MIDNIGHT

As the clock strikes twelve, our crew heads out to the runway for a routine inspection. Of particular importance, **each runway light is checked, and bulbs are replaced.** We're ready for the planes. We're ready for our passengers.

**So, there you have it.** A 24/7/365 journey — a snapshot, if you will — of the wide variety of activities that are going on at Asheville Regional Airport. Everything we do centers around our passengers' travel needs, as well as the vitality of our region as a whole. We are proud to be an integral part of Western North Carolina, and look forward to another productive 24/7/365.

**Mission:** To be the premier airport of choice for Western North Carolina travelers by providing an array of choices and amenities, distinctive customer service, value and convenience.



**Airport Director:**  
**Lew Bleiweis, A.A.E.**



**Authority Board Chair:**  
**Dave Hillier**

Attorney with Gum, Hillier & McCroskey, P.A., Asheville



**Vice-chairman:**  
**David Gantt**

Attorney with David Gantt Law Office & Chairman of the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners, Asheville



**Secretary/Treasurer:**  
**Jeffrey Piccirillo,**

Executive Food & Beverage Director at the Grove Park Inn, Asheville



**Board Member:**  
**Bill Moyer**

Attorney (retired),  
Hendersonville



**Board Member:**  
**Brownie Newman**

Partner, FLS Energy, Asheville



**Board Member:**  
**Bob Roberts**

Regional Executive  
Vice President of First  
Citizens Bank & Trust  
Co., Asheville



**Board Member:**  
**Martha Thompson**

Community Relations Manager,  
Progress Energy, Asheville

## Our numbers, at a glance — for year ended June 30, 2011

Throughout 2011, the Airport Authority focused on fulfilling its mission with an equally-important focus on fiscal responsibility. Careful planning led to a positive year of accomplishments, including a solid financial position.

| <b>Key Measures</b>                    | <b>2011</b>  | <b>2010</b>  | <b>2009</b>  |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Enplanements                           | 364,843      | 319,692      | 288,941      |
| Aircraft operations — Airline          | 21,001       | 18,994       | 19,404       |
| Aircraft operations — General Aviation | 38,721       | 44,621       | 47,223       |
| Aircraft operations — Military         | 4,675        | 4,214        | 3,228        |
| Total net assets                       | \$77,191,735 | \$73,280,177 | \$64,787,183 |

### Financial position

Net assets are a useful indicator of the Authority's financial position. The Authority's assets exceeded liabilities by \$77,191,735 at June 30, 2011, roughly a \$3.9 million increase from 2010, and a \$12.4 million increase from 2009. The daily operations of the airport are funded through the collection of user fees, such as parking receipts, rental car fees, landing fees, space rental and concessions fees. The following chart shows the major sources and the percentage of operating revenues for the year ended June 30, 2011.

## Statistics

### Airline Market Share

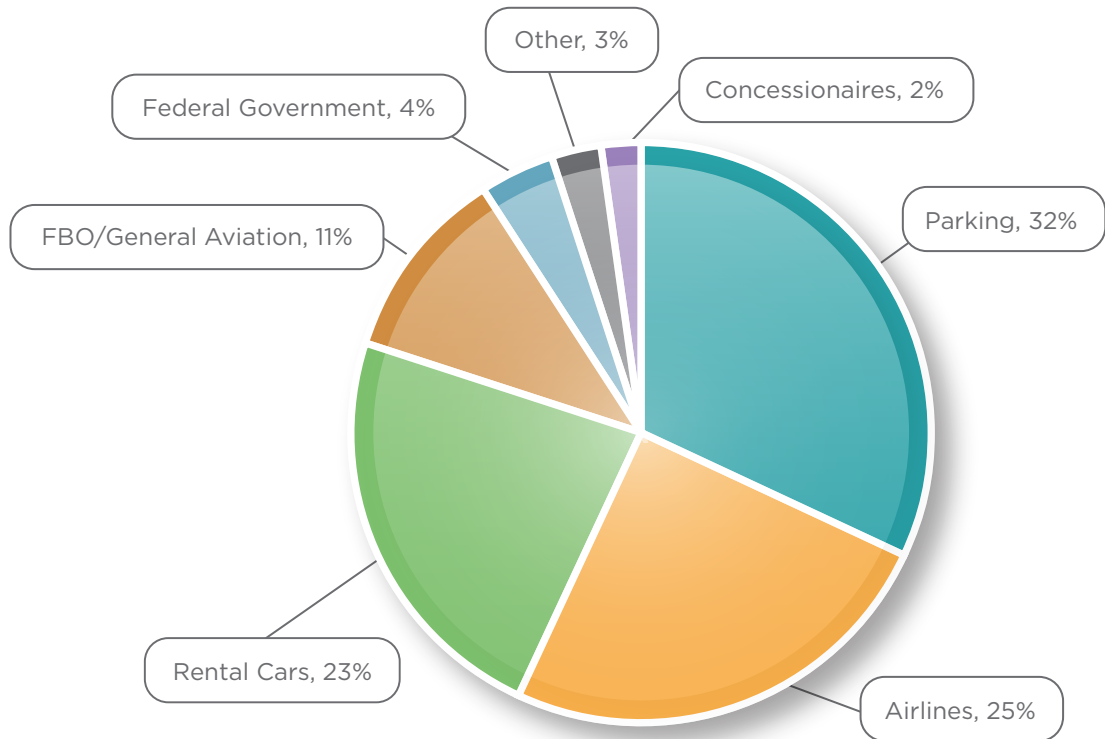
|                      |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| AirTran Airways      | 10% |
| Delta Air Lines      | 41% |
| American Airlines    | 2%  |
| Continental Airlines | 6%  |
| United Airlines      | 7%  |
| US Airways           | 32% |
| Vision Airlines      | 2%  |

Employees 59

Airline passengers 725,808  
1,989 passengers per day/average  
*14% increase over prior fiscal year*

Take-offs/Landings 64,397  
176 per day/average  
*-5.1% decrease over prior fiscal year*

## Sources of Revenue





Asheville Regional Airport Authority :: 61 Terminal Drive, Suite 1 :: Fletcher, NC 28732 :: 828-684-2226 :: [flyavl.com](http://flyavl.com)