



Anderson Regional Airport History

The beginning of the aviation era in Anderson saw Buena Vista Park as the site of some early aviation feats with hot air balloons and dirigibles. The level baseball field provided a landing area for these aviation shows. In 1928 locals say the need to provide an area for planes to insure air mail and emergency needs.

The first municipal airport in Anderson was just a grassy field located near where the Civic Center now stands. At this location such aviation notables as Amelia Earhart and Roscoe Turner landed, and they were welcomed by crowds of people.

The current Anderson Regional Airport began as a necessity to provide a safe landing area for the increasing 1930's aviation traffic. By 1935 the landing area had become a hazard due to mud, gullies, and problems with livestock in the landing zone.

In 1933, 236 acres of land was purchased from J. Roy Pennell to create the current airport. During World War II the grass airstrip was paved and served pilots learning tactical bombing techniques, Samuel L. "Dean" Prince, a former Dean of the University of South Carolina School of Law, served as General Chairman of the Anderson Airport Dedication Committee in 1938. On May 27, 1938, the new Anderson Airport was dedicated with great fanfare.

On December 8, 1941, a day after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Anderson Airport was seized by American soldiers from Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and all planes were grounded under the jurisdiction of the United States War Department. From that point on, the Anderson Airport would become a training field. For national security purposes, the airport was extended by 800 acres, improved as a reserve field and eventually placed under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Navy. Before and during the war years, the airport operations were leased to Southern Airways, which provided flight training to young Clemson cadets. Control of the airport was returned to local authorities in 1945.

Postwar years saw the growth of commercial flights coming to Anderson. Due to the short length of the runway, larger commercial jets were unable to land at the airport, but the Anderson Airport served smaller commercial jets, private planes, and other commercial aviation needs. On October 15, 1947, Eastern Air Lines began commercial service out of Anderson with 3 flights a day. By October 25, 1970, a new terminal,

complete with baggage claim and ticket booths, was dedicated to the memory of Samuel L. "Dean" Prince because of his belief in the growth of the airport.

On May 1, 1971, the dedication of the new Flight Services Station at the Anderson Regional Airport was celebrated as a part of an ongoing modernization of the facility.

On December 7, 1998, in an effort to convey to the public the extent of the airport's impact on the Upstate, the name was changed from "Anderson County Airport" to "Anderson Regional Airport".

A native born Andersonian and aviator, Ben F. Johnson, Jr. began flying in 1936 and taught many to fly during his 50 years in the aviation field. He was affectionately known as "Mr. Anderson Airport". In February 2000, a ceremony for the groundbreaking of new hangars was held and historical marker was unveiled for Mr. Ben Johnson, the first airport manager and a 2005 inductee into the South Carolina Aviation Hall of Fame.

Anderson Regional Airport (KAND) is a public airport 3 miles southwest of Anderson, in Anderson County, South Carolina. Anderson has no airline service or concourses for gates and no control tower, but in 2007 one runway was extended 1,000 ft. (300 m) to accommodate larger aircraft. It is one of the busiest airports in upstate South Carolina. With a length of 6,002 feet, it is the longest of the two runways at Anderson Regional Airport and one of the larger runways among the state's regional airports. It is also among the busiest. The airport receives over 14,000 visitors each year and generates over 13 million annually.

In May 2018, airport authorities announced plans for a 6.71-million-dollar facelift. The plan included further improvements of the main runway and building a new ADA compliant general aviation terminal (completed July 2020). The old 1970 terminal was demolished in August 2020 and a new parking lot and greenspace is set to be completed in early 2021.

Since 2009, the airport has hosted a bi-annual airshow that typically runs Saturday-Sunday and is free to the public. The Anderson Regional Airshow attracts an estimated 50,000 visitors to the airport each year during the two-day event.