

# STATE OF THE SYSTEM

## AVIATION IN WEST VIRGINIA



West Virginia's airports play a significant role in the state's economy and quality of life, including employment opportunity, serving the business community, supporting tourism, and providing essential services to the local communities they serve.

**34** public-use airports

**7** commercial service airports connect West Virginia to regional and national markets

**417,925** passengers boarded a commercial flight at these airports in 2019

West Virginia's airport system brings a variety of benefits to residents and visitors of the state

including facilitating business activity, shipping cargo, tourism, and more targeted aviation activities such as using unmanned aircraft (UAS) to monitor mining sites and transporting patients in rural areas via medical helicopter. Among the 34 public-use airports in West Virginia, seven provide commercial service. Three of these airports are considered primary use, including Yeager Airport in the City of Charleston; Huntington Tri-State Airport in the City of Huntington; and North Central West Virginia Airport associated with the City of Clarksburg.

In 2019, according to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) enplanement (boarding) data, there were 417,925 total commercial flight enplanements at the seven commercial service airports. These are not the only options for commercial air travel - there are out-of-state primary airports within an hour drive that serve WV residents and visitors, including Dulles International Airport (Northern Virginia), Roanoke Regional Airport, and Pittsburgh International Airport.

## WHY AVIATION IS IMPORTANT

According to the 2018 Multimodal Economic Impact Study for Huntington Tri-State Airport, the Airport and its associate businesses generated an estimated 1,275 jobs with a payroll of more than 54 million dollars in 2017. The total economic output of the Huntington Tri-State Airport was nearly 108 million dollars. Similarly, Yeager Airport generated approximately 1,800 jobs and had an estimated total economic impact valuation of more than 160 million dollars in 2016. These economic impacts are felt throughout an airport's region.



West Virginia's third primary commercial service airport, North Central West Virginia Airport associated with the City of Clarksburg, anchors a Mid-Atlantic Aerospace Complex (MAAC) which provides maintenance, manufacturing and training services for the aviation industry. The MAAC supports more than 1,300 aviation-related jobs with an annual economic impact of over 1 billion dollars.

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### TRENDS IN AVIATION

The coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak continues to have near-term impacts to the aviation industry's passenger volume. It is estimated that 2019 passenger levels of demand will likely not return until 2023 or 2024. However, long-term growth in aviation demand remains positive in outlook.

According to the FY 2020 - 2040 FAA Aerospace Forecast, U.S. carrier domestic passenger growth is anticipated to increase by an average of 2.0 percent per year, and domestic revenue passenger miles is projected to increase by 2.5 percent per year. Operations at the FAA and contract towers are forecast to grow 0.9 percent per year with commercial activity increasing at approximately four times the rate of non-commercial (general aviation and military) activity. The number of general aviation hours flown is projected to increase an average of 0.7 percent per year from 2020 to 2040.



### CURRENT PLANS AND PROGRAMS IN WEST VIRGINIA

The West Virginia State Aeronautics Commission (WVAC) administers a matching grant program for the 24 National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) listed public-use airports in West Virginia in order to receive federal funding through the FAA Airport Improvement Program (AIP). The WVAC has 6 main goals and objectives as defined in the 2019 West Virginia Department of Transportation's Aeronautics Commission Annual Report:

- Continue working with federal and state agencies to secure additional federal funding for airports
- Continue to conduct statewide firefighting, homeland security, and emergency training for airport firefighters and mutual aid responders
- Continue to provide state matching funds for airport improvement projects
- Continue to identify air transportation and infrastructure needs to meet current and future demands; provide additional funding and administrative assistance to airports
- Continue to encourage, foster, and promote the development of aeronautics by assisting with and participating in air shows and other aviation events
- Continue to support the science and art of flight, through cooperation with secondary, postsecondary, and other educational resource coordinating institutions

The logo for the West Virginia Aviation Economic Impact Study (WV AEIS), featuring a globe with an airplane and the text 'WEST VIRGINIA AVIATION ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY' and 'AERONAUTICS COMMISSION'.