

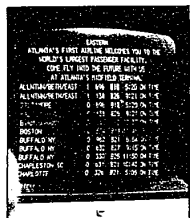


Concourse B reflects overhead not only society on its journey to here and there but also a contemporary environment.

Speedier passenger transfers is new Atlanta facility's objective

By IRIS SANDERSON JONES

A new international airport opened in Atlanta, Ga., last week, creating a new travel situation for



Flight information screens at Atlanta International now list flights arriving/departing alphabetically.

the approximately half million Detroit-area travelers who pass through there every year. Atlanta was a crossroads during wagon train, railroad and early highway days, and it has expanded dramatically as a connecting point for air travelers in the last 20 years. More than 70 percent of the passengers to this airport are flying on to other destinations.

The airport is officially called Hartsfield-Atlanta International Airport, but unofficially it is called Midfield, because the terminal was literally built between existing runways. Its unusual design was created specifically to serve connecting passengers.

A north and south terminal and an adjacent international terminal were built at one end of the complex for ticketing and baggage, but connecting passengers will never see or use these terminals.

They will fly in and out of four long, narrow concourses which are

connected to the terminals by a rapid transit system. A passenger who flies Eastern Airlines into Concourse C may take a swift one-minute ride to catch a Delta Airlines flight from Concourse A or a Republic Airlines flight from Concourse D. The rapid transit system, which is the key to this airport, is a fifth-generation people-mover made by the Transportation Division of Westinghouse Corp. It is the same basic system that Westinghouse built in Tampa and Orlando, Fla., Seattle, and Gatwick, England, but it will carry more people than all those systems combined.

Passengers may also walk or take a moving sidewalk between concourses.

Midfield claims to be the world's largest passenger terminal complex, and the second busiest airport in the world, second only to O'Hare in Chicago. It is expected to pass O'Hare by next year.

A 1979 Worldwide Airport Traffic

Survey, done by the Airport Operators Council International, showed O'Hare has 47,842,510 passengers, down 2.7 percent from the previous year, while Atlanta had 41,665,488 passengers, up 14 percent from the previous year.

The next eight airports, ranked by the number of passengers handled annually, were in Los Angeles, London (Heathrow), New York (Kennedy), San Francisco, Dallas/Fort Worth, Denver, Miami and New York (LaGuardia).

Atlanta ranked 35th in the U.S. when its last airport was built in 1961 to handle 18 million travelers. The dramatic increase to 41 million passengers last year, most of them connecting passengers, gave Atlanta a reputation for being a busy, crowded, uncomfortable airport with a continual traffic jam on the runways.

THE NEW AIRPORT, designed to accommodate 55 million people per year, has built-in expansion capabilities to increase that figure to 75 million. Although it is a very large complex, it was designed to reduce the amount of time and effort made by both planes and passengers during a typical flight.

The longest walking distance is 1,000 feet from the furthest gate of a concourse to the escalator in the center of the concourse, which takes you down one flight to the subway system built underneath all four concourses. The people mover is scheduled to arrive every 103 seconds, and to take only two minutes to the furthest point.

A similar expansion, and a similar reduction of travel time, was created for the planes which use the airport.

Runways bring planes in close to the terminals, where they turn in and out of their concourse runways like cars pulling in and out of a parking lot. Eastern Airlines says that this new system has already created a problem because of its efficiency.

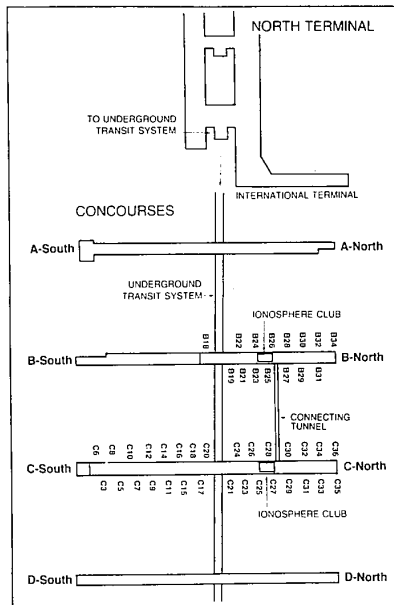
Eastern is still working on its old schedule, but planes are cutting eight minutes off their landing time and five minutes off their take-off time, creating a temporary traffic jam. The 72 gates in the old airport have grown to 138 gates in the new one.

The 1,000-foot-wide apron between concourses leaves room for two wide-body jets to park and two more wide-body jets to taxi in and out.

Several other innovations were also made in the design of this airport. The International Terminal has a new one-stop customs and Im-

migration Service so that most passengers will process their immigration papers and baggage in one stop.

The 12 security facilities, with their walk-throughs and adjacent X-ray machines, are clustered together so that they can increase the flow of passengers through security to all gates.



The North and South Terminals will be used by passengers getting on or off planes in Atlanta. Connecting passengers will use Delta gates in Concourse A and the South end of Concourse B; Eastern G gates in Concourse C and the North end of Concourse B; and gates for Republic and other airlines in Concourse D. Each concourse has small ticketing, information, snack shop and other facilities, so connecting passengers need never leave their deplaning area to take the rapid transit to a neighboring concourse.

travel log

Iris Sanderson Jones
contributing travel editor

How Atlanta measures up: less hassle, too much gray

FLIGHT 762 ATLANTA TO DETROIT — Eastern Airlines had a media briefing in Atlanta today to show off the new international airport here.

I was the only writer from the Detroit area, but newspaper and television people converged from New York, California and Canada to see what has been billed as the most innovative new airport of the decade.

I was pretty dubious. I have walked through bigger and bigger airports all over the world, and was not likely to be enthused by "the largest airport complex in the world." If I walk any farther from one plane to another, I might as well walk home.

The last time I was in Atlanta, a runway traffic jam forced my plane to divert to Huntsville, Ala., which in turn made me miss my plane to Mexico. After 12 hours in the old Atlanta airport, waiting for the next available plane, I believed that old saw: "If you die in the south and go to Heaven, you change planes in Atlanta."

Here is my personal experience in the new airport, and my personal response to it. Remember, the airport has only been open a few days and they are still getting the kinks out of it.

THE PLANE WAS barely on the ground when we turned into the apron between concourses. Planes move in all directions, like cars moving in and out of a parking lot. Will they have fender benders? An Eastern Airlines spokesman said that this is because planes are taking off and landing faster than allowed for on the old schedule, and that it will clear when the new schedule starts in December.

I walk into a traditional-looking concourse, except the aisles are much wider and everything is set low enough for wheel-chair users. An information lady is there to answer questions.

This is Concourse C.

Everything is a neutral gray, intended to be peaceful. I follow the carpet to the tiled area in the exact center of the complex, where the escalator goes one floor down to the rapid transit system.

To the right are several double doors to the subway. Ahead a few passengers walk or take the moving sidewalk. The subway arrives within seconds. It jerks to a start, a voice announces the next stop and in seconds we are at Concourse B.

I remember the confusion of riding the subway around a loop in Dallas/Fort Worth, but it is simpler here. The subway goes straight from the terminal through all four concourses, and straight back.

There seem to be very few people around. The

north and south terminals are empty at noon, which makes me wonder how the airport can possibly be working at full speed. Eventually I understand: only Atlanta passengers use the ticket and baggage services in the terminals, and that is only about 20 percent of the total. The others never leave the concourses.

We tour a new computerized baggage system of which Eastern Airlines is very proud. It isn't working yet, but we get the idea: open cars carry unsorted baggage from what they call Landside (the terminal) to what they call Airside (the runways).

A man with a computer sorts each bag by destination, and places it on one of the yellow pods which run on a conveyor belt, each one tipping its bag into the appropriate tunnel, where another employee takes it off.

Every brain maintains that this will improve security (very few little hands on your suitcase), delivery and accountability (the computer always knows where your bag is). I'll have to take their word for it until proven otherwise, but I have a deep-seated suspicion that computers can lose bags faster than anybody.

THAT AND THE constant unrelieved gray of the concourse buildings are my only complaints. I think the airport does what it was designed to do. It gets connecting passengers from one plane to another in a hurry, and without much confusion.

Planes get in and out faster. The greatly enlarged space absorbs passengers so thoroughly that the airport looks empty. The screens which tell you about your flight are alphabetized, so that you can find Detroit in a hurry and quickly note the next plane.

Eastern built a tunnel called the Short Cut between the two concourses which it uses to speed your travels even more. They have placed one of their Ionosphere Clubs (\$40 a year membership in many cities) at either end of the Short Cut.

These private clubs will probably be well used, because I didn't see any good restaurants in the concourses. There are snack bars (coffee 50 cents) and cocktail bars but nothing comparable to the restaurants at Detroit Metropolitan Airport.

Atlanta has 599,139 takeoffs and landings a year because it is the airline hub of the Sun Belt, bringing people in and sending them out to destinations in all directions. If you are a regular connecting passenger there, as thousands of business travelers are, your life will probably be easier now because of this new airport.

Andy Machak tells Bill Cosby: "A CPR-trained guard brought me back from the dead."

Andy Machak:
"Lackluster, a guy with Red Cross CPR training works where I do. A security guard. Don Guarino. He saved my life, no foolin'!"

I'd checked tin-plating lines a hundred times before, but that day was different.

A boom came around from behind and pinned me to a T-bar... I lifted me right off my feet."

Bill Cosby:
"That's a big ouch."

Andy Machak:
"Last thing I remember was trying to find a kill switch..."

Three days later—in the hospital—Don told me it took six guys to get me down; somebody said *no pulse or breathing*, and Don remembers saying, "I gotta try anyway."

Bill Cosby:
"Sounds like you had them worried!"

Andy Machak:
"Well, I was clinically dead. Can't believe it myself, Bill. But thanks to Don's CPR training, I'm alive thanks to Red Cross. I'm alive."

Bill Cosby:
"CPR training can make the

difference between life and death. Take it from Andy Machak. Help keep Red Cross ready."



It takes steady, trained hands to perform CPR.



American Red Cross