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causing delayed flights, crowded buildings and congested access roads. But that's all a thing of the past, say Wayne County and Northwest Airlines officials who are promoting the new additions and improvements at the airport as putting it on the map with world-class metro airports such as Chicago and Atlanta.

Northwest Airlines, which is the primary tenant for the new terminal, partnered with Wayne County back in 1996 for the development of the facility, which is scheduled to open for operation on Sunday, Feb. 24. The new facility can be reached by taking I-275 south to Eureka Road and Eureka east to the airport drive. The airport is also accessible from I-94 by taking the airport/Merriman exit.

As its name suggests, the McNamara midfield terminal is sandwiched between two operating airfields. The basic layout of the facility forms an uppercase T-shape with the terminal linking up at the center of concourse A, which stretches southwest to northeast in a straight line for approximately one-mile. It is the primary concourse — one of three — and contains 64 of the total 97 gates for the new facility. The other two concourses run parallel to the first and are connected to it by an underground tunnel.

## Keep it simple

A national survey conducted by Northwest and Wayne County late last year corroborated what the project developers for the new terminal already suspected. That, "What people want most from an airport is a simple and straightfor-

ward layout that is hassle-free and not confusing. That's why we came up with the linear layout," explained Kathleen J. Nelson, Northwest's director of finance for the Midfield Terminal Project.

Besides a simple format, convenience was of equal importance. And according to the survey what passengers said they were looking for were the basics — such as bathrooms, display boards, seats — and a lot of them.

To show off the new complex, Northwest invited media personnel from Michigan and adjoining



states for a preview tour late last month. Although construction workers were still onsite at that time, the complex was nearly com-

plete and already outfitted with a generous number of many of the desired amenities: Some 9,000 seats at gate waiting areas; 50 display boards along with 10 large-screen televisions spanning eight by fourteen feet; and, public restrooms with 475 stalls, a number which — Nelson was quick to point out — "is double what the code book said is needed for a facility of this size."

Some other conveniences include 106 ticket counter positions, a mile-and-a-half of moving walkways, an elevated two-car

tram that runs inside the length of the primary concourse, and a luggage handling system with 11 domestic and seven international carousels.

In comparison, the James M. Duvet terminal's current luggage handling system may seem slight.

"I always describe the Duvet's luggage claim as looking like it is in someone's basement. There are only five carousels and usually only three of them are working," Nelson remarked, during the tour of the two million square feet mid-field terminal.

## Fine touches

Although passengers will appreciate the conveniences of the new facility, it's the many fine touches that visitors will remember, Nelson said.

A few of the more outstanding are the handmade tiles of a creamy iridescent color covering the bathroom entrances; a 38-foot black granite water fountain at the center of the main concourse; and a 700-foot-long series of backlit, curved glass panels illuminating the connecting tunnel between the main and commuter concourses with an otherworldly blue glow.

Of the facility's total space, approximately 125,000 square feet are dedicated to the concessions program, which will include 80 restaurants and retail shops, although not all of them will be open during the first days of operation.

Wayne County, which retained control of the concessions program, originally intended to have 85 units; however, one of the larger concessionaires unexpectedly withdrew their proposal leaving the terminal with several vacancies. Fear of the economic backlash caused by the 9-11 attack was one of the reasons cited, said Len Singer, a spokesperson for Wayne County Detroit Metro Airport.

"It was an amicable parting," Singer said, "And though their leaving did put us in a position where some of those spots (for concessions) won't be filled, it also gave the county an opportunity to try and attract more locally-owned businesses and businesses with a regional flavor. For instances, one of the things we thought was missing from the concessions program and we were able to bring in-were a couple of good old-fashioned, Michigan, Coney Island restaurants."

## Local flavor

Some of the businesses with local ties are the DIA Store, Motown Music Review, Gayle's Chocolates, Henry Ford Museum, Michigan Marketplace and On-line Café. Other stores and restaurants include ORA Oxygen, Diego's Mexican Village, Pasta Pasta and Musashi along with more typical offerings such as Taco Bell, McDonald's and Burger King. Many of the shops and restaurants are grouped in sections with names like "Woodward Avenue," "Cruisin' Lane," and "V8 Avenue," in order to better emphasize the theme for the new facility which is "America's Engine."

It was so named, said Singer, "to help emphasize the strong connection of the airport with the automotive industry and the surrounding communities."

As of now, only ticketed passengers will be allowed onto the main concourse where concessions are located. However, McNamara said he hopes to come up with a security procedure for those non-passengers wanting to partake of the terminal's unique offerings.

"We have the type of retailers (at the new terminal) that might make you want to say to your wife, 'Honey, let's go out and have dinner there tonight,'" McNamara said.

## Economic generator

Wayne County officials predict the overall economic impact of the new and improved airport on southeast Michigan-as well as the rest of the state-to be enormous.

"It's going to be one of the greatest economic generators for Michigan ever. In 10 years, you won't believe what you see going on here," McNamara said.

International businesses dealing in Asian markets, for example, might find southeastern Michigan an attractive area to set-up their headquarters, because the airport is the only one in the U.S. that offers direct flights to China, McNamara said.

In the long run, the airport's success as an economic generator rests on one key feature — its fourth runway, which puts it ahead of most other major airports, McNamara said.

Wayne County officials hope to raise an additional \$900 million bond issue in order to totally revamp the older terminals. Construction on those terminals could begin as early as next year.



STAFF PHOTO BY BRYAN MITCHELL

Finding your way: Giant directories greet travelers in several locations to help find the way.

# Terminal called 1st step toward a major 'aerotropolis'

BY HUGH GALLAGHER

STAFF WRITER

hgallagher@ec.homecomm.net

The opening of Northwest Airlines Edward H. McNamara Terminal is the first phase of what some believe will be a new urban center for Southeast Michigan.

In December, Wayne County contracted with John Kasarda, professor of management and director of the Kennan Institute of Private Enterprise at the University of North Carolina, to help define and market development ideas and business strategies around the airports and help target potential developers for the proposed Pinnacle Aeropark development south of Metro Airport. Kasarda is being paid \$63,000 for a 4-1/2 month contract.

The expert on airport development nationally and internationally is an advocate for the creation of "aerotropolises." Kasarda argues that all major urban centers have developed around transportation centers: seaports, river towns and rail terminuses.

Kasarda sees a major opportunity for this kind of development linking Wayne County's two county-owned airports, Metro and Willow Run, which are separated by only 12 miles along I-94.

Sean Brosnan, director of the Willow Run, said the opening of the new terminal as the first step in what he calls County Executive Ed McNamara's vision for Southeast Michigan development.

"The development of the new McNamara Terminal will be great for aviation in Michigan," said Brosnan. "This is spectacular for this area. Opening up the south end of airport fits in with the private development of property south of the airport. ... It's like opening a whole new airport. And the more companies in, the more freight which is good for us."

In Kasarda's view, presented at a talk to community and business leaders in December, the aerotropolis will be the site for software companies, food warehousing, high-tech manufacturing, high-end hotels and restaurants and shopping malls.

The proposed Pinnacle Aeropark, an 1,800-acre mixed use project is Romulus and Huron Township, is expected to attract industrial development, hotels and an 18-hole golf course.

"It is not location that is so critical. We used to talk in commercial real estate of the three L's — location, location, location," Kasarda said in December. "The three L's

have been replaced by the three A's, accessibility, accessibility, accessibility, where time-cost access to the airport is really the driving factor."

Kasarda told his audience that the current recession, including the decline in air traffic, is only a cyclical event and that things will turn around in a short time. For modern business, speed is the determining factor of development. Business needs air transport.

Kasarda said e-business will continue to grow. Consumers, he said, will be willing to pay a premium for quick delivery and e-business will have to locate their

warehouses and business operations near airports. He said this is already being done in many cities around the world.

Amsterdam's Schiphol airport has become a city unto itself with a major shopping center, office buildings, warehouses and light industry all built around access to the airport and employing 52,000 people.

"You're going to see this in Detroit, the only question is whether it will be in 2010 or 2020," Kasarda said.

The first part of Kasarda's report is due soon and will deal with Willow Run Airport.

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