

NEWS



DALLAS FORT WORTH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
PUBLIC AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

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DFW INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT BIDS FAREWELL TO VENERABLE AIRPORT TRAIN SYSTEM - 97 MILLION MILES AND 250 MILLION PASSENGERS LATER

Ceremonial Last Ride Honors Staff and Former Workers Who Kept Airport Train Running for 31 Years; Decommissioning Ceremony Marks End of a Groundbreaking Era in Mass Transit

DFW INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, Texas (June 21, 2005) — DFW International Airport today retired its pioneering Airport Train, after more than 31 years of service to travelers and employees. The decommissioning ceremony came one month after DFW inaugurated Skylink, the world's largest airport people mover system, eliminating the need for the Airport Train to continue service.

Originally called "Airtrans" and later also known as the American Airlines "TrAAin" and the Employee Train, the Airport Train became the first successful, fully automated transit system in the United States when it opened with DFW International Airport in January of 1974. During its 31-year run, the Airport Train carried more than 250 million passengers including travelers and employees. Its 68-car fleet logged a cumulative total of over 97-million miles, equivalent to one trip to the sun or 204 round trips to the moon.

"This train system launched DFW into a new era of airport transportation back in 1974, and for years it set a new standard for reliability and efficiency," said Jeff Fegan, CEO of DFW International Airport. "It's only fitting that the Airport Train's retirement also heralds the dawn of the next great era at DFW, with the debut of Skylink and the new International Terminal D."

Workers who operated and maintained the Airport Train were honored today with the system's ceremonial last ride, a final 22-minute loop around the Airport at a modest 17 miles per hour. The train system operated typically with a staff of over 80 employees performing maintenance, repair, cleaning and operational duties. Today's event honored current and former Airport Train workers and their families.

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“The Airport Train and the dedicated team of people who kept it running so remarkably well all these years deserve our deepest appreciation,” said Tomas Rivera, assistant vice president for airport transportation at DFW. “This train system outlived its original life expectancy by eleven years, thanks to the creativity and resourcefulness of the train’s technicians, who even resorted to forging parts by hand once they couldn’t buy them anymore.”

Following the decommissioning, the Airport Train’s guideway will be dismantled and the entire system including cars, spare parts, and guideway pieces, will be sold at auction as required by law. DFW will donate two of the Airport Train cars to North Texas Historic Transportation, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving historic transportation in the North Texas area.

“This train marked a very significant milestone in the history of not only airport people-mover systems, but also for mass transit in general,” said Rivera. “The Airport Train proved you could reliably move passengers with an automated system on a very large scale, and it also allowed DFW to usher in the modern age of people-mover systems at airports, universities, cities and other urban settings.”

The original DFW concept of an automated airport train system was the subject of an industry-wide design competition, and in July 1971, the DFW Airport Board awarded a \$34-million contract to Vought Corporation for the design, construction and testing of the system. Construction was completed in a remarkably fast 30 months. The original design concepts and the early years of its operation also included the use of Airport Train cars for mail and supply deliveries, baggage, and for trash removal from the terminals. The system was converted to only passenger use within a few years of its startup.

The Airport Train was considered a modern marvel for years after its debut because of its full automation, and the novelty of not having any attendants or conductors on board any of its cars. The system instead was operated by two controllers in the Central Control Room. An on-board computer system designated routes, controlled the train’s movements and delivered electronic voice announcements to passengers.

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The Airport Train carried over 23,000 people a day at its peak of service in 1987, shuttling people between DFW's four original terminals and remote parking lots. The train also achieved a remarkable degree of efficiency, for example achieving a reliability rate of 99.8% in 1988 while operating on a 24-hour schedule. Operating along 13 miles of fixed guideway, the Airport Train's cars each provided seating for up to 16 passengers and standing room for up to 24 people.

Many of the Airport Train's pioneering design concepts, such as the extensive use of computers in logic and control applications, the management of system operations from a central control room, and its fully automatic design requiring no operators on vehicles or at stations, are concepts still used and further refined in today's modern people mover systems including Skylink.

At its peak the Airport Train system consisted of three distinct services, namely the landside passenger service, the Employee Train and the American Airlines "TrAAin." The landside passenger service was mostly phased out in 2003 with the advent of DFW's Terminal Link shuttle bus service, while the Employee Train was phased out on May 9 of this year and replaced by a contracted bus service. The American Airlines "TrAAin" portion of the system made its final passenger runs on May 20, 2005, and was replaced the following day by the new Skylink system which now serves all of DFW's terminals, including the new International Terminal D, on the secure side of the Airport.

About the Airport Train / By the numbers

15: Guideway length in miles for all Airport Train routes

33: Total number of Airport Train stations

17: Top speed in miles per hour reached by Airport Train cars

68: Number of passenger vehicles in Airport Train fleet

11,450: Continuous days of service provided by Airport Train

274,800: Continuous hours of service provided by Airport Train

250,000,000: Total passengers carried

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92,955,820: Approximate mileage from the earth to the sun

97,000,000: Total mileage run by all Airport Train cars

\$34,000,000: Original contract cost for the Airport Train & guideway

About DFW International Airport

Located halfway between the cities of Dallas and Fort Worth, Texas, DFW International Airport is the world's third busiest, offering nearly 1,800 flights per day and serving 57 million passengers a year. DFW International Airport provides non-stop service to 130 domestic and 37 international destinations worldwide. For the latest news, real-time flight information, parking availability or further details regarding the many services provided at DFW International Airport, log on to www.dfwairport.com.

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