



Athens Ben Epps Airport (AHN) Fact Sheet, FY 2022

Mike Mathews, Director

Website: www.accgov.com/airport; Main Office Telephone: 706-613-3420



**AHN operates at a profit, receiving no funds from the ACC General Fund.
AHN contributes funds to ACC in sales & property tax revenues,
and in payments for administrative overheads (see p. 2).**

BASIC INFORMATION

- Historical origins of Airport Property: Pauper Farm ca. 1893 in historic Clarke County ¹.
- Year Airport established: 1917, first civilian airport in Georgia
- Named for: Ben Epps (1886-1937) first aviator in Georgia
- Airport Acreage (current): 450 acres total; 78.17 acres (16.14%) under impervious surface (roads, runways, taxiways, apron areas, parking lots, buildings, etc.); 410.0 acres (83.86%) under grass/pasture, wooded, landscaped/greenspace ².

OFFICIAL STATUS AND DESIGNATION ³

- Level III Airport in Georgia aviation system, (Level III airports defined as the existing air carrier and general aviation airports that have a regional business impact)
- Commercial Airport
- FAA Part 139 Airport, required to accept scheduled & non-scheduled air carrier aircraft with 30+ seats.
- Ranks 8th in GA system of 103 airports (Based on # of visitors in 2020)

FACILITIES & SERVICES ^{4,5}

- Airport open 24/7, 365 days. Fixed Base Operations Hours: 6:00 am – 9:00 pm daily; on-call after hours.
- Air Traffic Control Tower, operating hours 8:00 am – 8:00 pm daily.
- Aircraft Rescue & Fire Fighter, (ARFF) Certified staff. Airport maintains a fully operational ARFF fire truck and fire station to respond to all on-airport emergencies.
- 2 Runways (main runway 6,122 feet long; second runway 3,995 feet long)
- Customer Service Desk; Vending Machines/Coffee Stand
- Fueling facilities (Avgas & Jet A fuel)
- Aircraft housed at AHN: 98
- T Hangars for lease # 77
- Aircraft maintenance/repair shops (2) and avionics shop (1), available on-site.
- Baggage Handling
- Aircraft Lavatory Service
- Hertz car rental headquarters for Athens is based on the airport
- Athens Flight School
- Civil Air Patrol
- Georgia State Patrol facility, (also used to house the Governor's helicopter).
- Search/Rescue Support. Using AHN, GA State Patrol works closely with local law enforcement when requested, to assist with search and rescue and other life threatening events that require the use of a helicopter.

SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE AND SAFETY ⁵

- Airport is available to emergency personnel for needs during community disaster response events.
- Angel flights provided by local pilots when requested by nonprofit organizations.

EMPLOYEES ⁴

- 7 Full time ACC employees, 8 part time employees.

CLIENTS, CUSTOMERS ^{4,5}

- Corporate: Toyota, Crown Royal, Atlanta Falcons, Caterpillar, NetJets, Wheels Up, and others.
- Military: All branches of the military fly to Athens in various aircraft. This airport is under contract with the U. S. Department of Defense to fuel military aircraft and helicopters
- Private: General aviation aircraft fly in from all over the country to do business in, or just visit, Athens.
- Charters: UGA and opposing teams fly in from all over the country into Athens using chartered aircraft. The teams include (but are not limited to) football and basketball to gymnastics, baseball, and soccer.

OPERATIONS ^{4,5}

- Number of flights arriving + leaving: ("Flight Operations"): 40,250 in 2020
- Commercial Passenger Service: 1970-2003 = US Air (Athens to Charlotte);
2008-2014 = Pacific Wings / Seaport, (Athens to Nashville)

VISITORS, PASSENGERS ^{3,4}

- # Visitors per year: 51,632/year in 2019) (8th in the state)
- Primary market area served: AHN is a Regional Airport that reaches out into other counties in NE Georgia. serving their business and community needs.

ECONOMIC IMPACT^{3,4}

- Direct economic impact: \$14.5 million and 191 employees
- Indirect economic impact: \$13.3 million and 141 employees
- Total economic impact: \$27.8 million (19th in the state) and 332 employees.

REVENUES, EXPENSES, BUDGET^{4,5}

- Annual revenue sources include aircraft fuel sales, ramp, landing and other fees, and hangar rental.
- Annual expenses: operating & maintenance expenses; aircraft fuel costs are a major expense on the airport
- Balanced budget: The airport does not rely on any help from the Athens Clarke County General fund. The airport is currently self-sustaining and operates at a profit.

GDOT, FAA, Fed DOT, ACC funds for Capital Projects^{4,5}

- Federal, State funding: The airport has received \$21 million in the past 3 years to rehabilitate the main runway and taxiway system. Federal funding 90%, 5% State, 5% Local. State funding 75%, Local 25%.
- Local matching funding for instance in ACC SPLOST, TSPLOST Projects.

INVESTMENT & RETURNS TO ACC (funds that are indirectly returned to ALL ACC residents)^{5,6}

- Annual Sales Tax revenues from airport (fuel sales, leases, etc.) returned to ACC Tax Commissioner Office: \$72,383 in FY 21 (per AHN financial report)
- Property Taxes (airplanes, helicopters, vehicles, etc.) returned to ACC Tax Commissioner Office: approximately \$300,000 annually.⁶
- Monthly payments to ACC for administrative overheads, \$161,968 in FY21.⁵

KEY ASPECTS THAT ANCHOR THE AIRPORT WITH THE COMMUNITY⁵

- The airport is critical to local economic development opportunities and associated job growth.
- AHN offers a critical connection to the outside world to help support the future of Athens.
- The FAA requires the airport to be maintained and supported by our community.
- Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) Chapter 780, Athens.

CURRENT AND POTENTIAL INITIATIVES AT AHN⁵

**** items that directly provide potential/future benefits to all ACC citizens**

- Infrastructure development (Capital Projects): Main Runway renovation (2018), Taxiway Alpha renovation & Localizer (2021).
- Air Service Development** , return of Commercial Passenger Service to AHN: ongoing, active recruitment.
- Airport Promotion and Access**
 - Airport Wayfinding signage in ACC roads (TSPLOST project completed 2020).
 - New Airport entrance on Lexington Road (TSPLOST proposed project 2021).
 - Monument Sign on Lexington Road (TSPLOST proposed project 2021)
- Parks & Recreation** : (All which will be free and open to the community)
 - Airport Micro Park under development (2020-2021);
 - Multi-use trails around Airport perimeter (TSPLOST proposed project 2021-2023) linked to Firefly Trail, Micro Park
 - Children's Runway Park: proposed project 2022 –
- Sustainability (addressing the 100% Clean/Renewable Energy goal in ACC):
 - Three Fuel efficient vehicles in use. Two are operations vehicles and one is a fuel truck.
 - Plan to install reclaim tanks on both Avgas and Jet A fuel tanks to eliminate fuel waste.
 - Green space/recreation** ; Micro park under development, trails proposed
 - Green space: solar installations, tree planting program: for future consideration
- Public Events at the Airport**
 - Fly-in events, Air shows, show 'n tell demonstration/participation shows
 - Farmers Market
 - Arts & Crafts
 - Races, parades
 - ACC Animal Services shelter Pet Adoption events in conjunction with other public events
 - Fireworks shows (2020 event drew 1000s of spectators).

Data Sources:

1. Historic Map of Clarke County, GA, 1893, C.M. Strahan. UGA Archives Special Collection.
2. ACC Planning Department, 2021.
3. 2020 Georgia Statewide Airport Economic Impact Study (data up to 2019).
4. AHN Annual Report, FY2020
5. AHN Airport Administration & Financial data
6. ACC Tax Commissioner's Office.