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New Exhibit Celebrates PHL Airport's 75th Anniversary

Vintage photographs and milestones highlight PHL's history of commercial air service

PHILADELPHIA -- To commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the start of its commercial air service, Philadelphia International Airport (PHL) has a new exhibit on display with a nostalgic theme. *75 Years of Commercial Air Service* focuses on PHL's transformation into a major hub airport and one of the largest economic engines in the region. Located along the Terminal C-D link, the exhibit is accessible to ticketed passengers and will be on display through December 2015.

75 Years of Commercial Air Service offers a photographic chronology of PHL, which has evolved from an airport in 1940 with approximately 40,000 annual passengers and only four airline carriers into today's airport which presently serves more than 30 million passengers a year with 29 carriers. The exhibit also provides historical narratives on PHL that pre-dates the start of commercial air service in 1940.

"This exhibit illustrates how the Airport has changed over the years," said Philadelphia International Airport Chief Curator Leah Douglas. "Some passengers from the area will likely remember the old days and appreciate how much has been achieved."

During the early 1940s, PHL was still known as Philadelphia Municipal Airport and the four carriers were American, Eastern, TWA, and United. At the time, the airlines primarily flew 21-passenger two-motor Douglas DC-3 planes and the Airport charged no landing fees. A taxicab cost 75 cents per person and the bus fare was 10 cents.

Military security forced the Airport to close during World War II. When commercial air service was restored in 1945, Philadelphia Municipal Airport was renamed Philadelphia International Airport with the start of transatlantic service by American Overseas Airlines.

Throughout the decades, PHL has responded to the changing needs of the aviation industry with numerous expansion and improvement projects.

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In the 1950s, the City of Philadelphia built a new terminal building which would become Terminals B and C. The dawn of the jet age in the 1960s fostered the planning and construction of more terminals, longer runways and upgraded terminal facilities in the 1970s.

The 1980s saw the construction of a modern FAA air traffic control tower, expanded parking garages, and the inauguration of the SEPTA Airport Rail Line, which provides a direct connection to Center City. Growth continued in the 1990s with the consolidation of Terminals B and C, the opening of the Philadelphia Airport Marriott Hotel, and development of the Philadelphia Marketplace Concessions Program.

Since 2000, the Airport has invested \$2 billion in capital improvements including 2 new terminals, new terminal connectors, a renovated and expanded terminal hub, and expanded terminal facilities. When Terminal F opened in 2001, it revolutionized the Airport experience for travelers using US Airways Express by providing those customers with a state-of-the-art terminal. The magnificent International Terminal A-West in 2003, forming the geographical and international gateway to the Airport. Projects including a runway extension and infrastructure improvements continue today to improve efficiency and enhance passenger experience.

“This exhibit offers a nostalgic perspective of our airport while showcasing PHL’s many historic milestones,” said Airport CEO Mark Gale. “The Airport has improved its services through the years and will continue to respond to advances in aviation today and tomorrow.”

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Vintage photos and other artifacts are part of the exhibit commemorating 75 years of commercial air service at PHL.

This year, Philadelphia International Airport celebrates the 75th anniversary of its commercial air service. In 1940, the Airport served 40,000 passengers flying to a handful of cities. Today, more than 30 million passengers travel annually to 131 destinations around the world.

Philadelphia International Airport is owned and operated by the City of Philadelphia. The Airport is a self-sustaining entity that operates without the use of local tax dollars. It is one of the largest economic engines in Pennsylvania, generating an estimated \$14.4 billion in spending to the regional economy and accounting for more than 141,000 jobs.