

## Dodge City Regional Airport Brief History <sup>1</sup>

The first landing field in Dodge City was located northeast of the city in the current location of Gibson's Pharmacy. Mr. McCoy, of Luther and McCoy Motor Company, purchased 160 acres of land for the purpose of a landing field. This landing field would be used from 1927 through 1934.

The land where the Dodge City Regional Airport is currently was purchased in 1888 by the State of Kansas from Dr. C. A. Milton. The land was used as a forestry experiment station which was supervised by R. M. Wright, one of the seven founders of Dodge City. R. M. Wright was in charge of the project and thousands of trees, mostly locust, box elder, cedar, and cottonwood. Due to bores and severe winters, most of the trees were killed and the project was abandoned. In 1919, the State of Kansas deeded the property to Ford County to be used as a poor farm.

October 1928, the headlines of the local paper read "Colonel Lindbergh Approves Airport Site on Visit Here". Colonel Charles Lindbergh, Vice President of Transcontinental Air Transport Company, inspected the new airport site east of Dodge City and expressed his approval for it as a Midwest airport division point. Thousands of people gathered at McCoy Landing Field to see Col. Lindbergh land in his Falcon Curtis plane. Col. Lindbergh spent the night at the local Lora Locke Hotel, ate breakfast with 25 local businessmen and then drove to the selected airport site 3 miles east of Dodge City for the inspection. After the inspection, Col. Lindbergh took off in his plane for Las Vegas from McCoy Field. Transcontinental Air Transport Company spent between \$50,000 and \$75,000 in buildings and other improvements at the airport site.

In 1929, Ford County leased the property to the City of Dodge City who subleased it to Mid Continent Air Express Company.

In 1934, Dodge City Airport was approved for \$12,000 in work and to employ 200 people. The project was financed with federal funds. The work included filling the land to grade, construction of fences and construction of an L shaped runway and relocating the beacon from McCoy field to the new airport location.

In 1938, with the help of Mayor Zenas Arthur Nevins, the City of Dodge City acquired the title to the land and airport improvements.

In 1940, the airport began expansion using WPA workers to build four runways, three of which were grass, or fair weather runways, and one was paved. The work also included expansion of Military Avenue, construction of the administration building, hangars, repair shop and demolition of the farm buildings on the southwest corner of the airport property. Rock for the new terminal building was quarried west of Jetmore on the south side of the Buckner Creek. Three hundred yards of rock were required for the terminal project.

By 1943, the administration building, runways, large hangar and repair shop were completed with the help of the federal government.

In May of 1956, runway lights were installed with ongoing improvements up to the present.

The Dodge City Regional Airport is a vital part of the southwestern Kansas regional airport system and is an integral part of the transportation infrastructure for the region. The airport is a vital link for the quality of life, economic growth and the stability of our community. Our main objective at the Dodge City Regional Airport is to maintain safe and stable air service for our visitors arriving by air, including commercial service, charter service, military, cargo operations and the general aviation.

The Dodge City Regional Airport has two active runways; 14-32 which is 6,900' by 100' asphalt runway; 02-20, our cross wind runway, is 4,650' by 100' asphalt runway. The Dodge City Regional Airport is a fully certificated airport with the Federal Aviation Administration. The airport is regulated by the Federal Aviation Administration under Part 139 Federal Standards.

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<sup>i</sup> "Dodge City Regional Airport: Brief History" compiled and submitted to the KSHS by the city of Dodge City, KS on 09/04/2018.