



Georgia Department of Transportation



• ECONOMIC IMPACT REPORT FOR •
ATHENS-BEN EPPS AIRPORT



September 2020

According to Site Selection Magazine, Georgia is **ranked as the #1 state for doing business.**

Georgia Airports Mean Business.

Airports in Georgia generate positive economic impacts as well as support many other sectors of local and state economies. In the summer of 2019, the Georgia Department of Transportation undertook a statewide study to estimate the annual economic impact of 102 study airports. The study estimated economic impacts for seven commercial airports and 95 general aviation airports. This report includes impacts related to **Athens-Ben Epps Airport** and summarizes all Statewide Airport Economic Impacts.

Annual Economic Impacts for Athens-Ben Epps Airport

Residents, businesses, and visitors benefit from the state's well-developed airport system. While supporting transportation, healthcare, tourism, and commerce, airports contribute to the economy. The Economic Impact Study identified specific economic impacts associated with the **Athens-Ben Epps Airport** and other airport benefits. Key impacts for the **Athens-Ben Epps Airport** follow.

- Annual Visitors **51,632**
- Employment Supported **332**
- Annual Payroll **\$10,051,200**
- Annual Spending **\$17,790,400**
- Annual Economic Impact **\$27,841,600**
- Airport-Supported Annual State & Local Sales & Income Tax Revenues **\$1,219,180**

Economic Impacts for Athens-Ben Epps Airport

The table below provides information on the sources of annual economic impact estimated for the **Athens-Ben Epps Airport**. For more information on the impacts reported here, consult the study's Technical Report available at dot.ga.gov/IS/AirportAid.

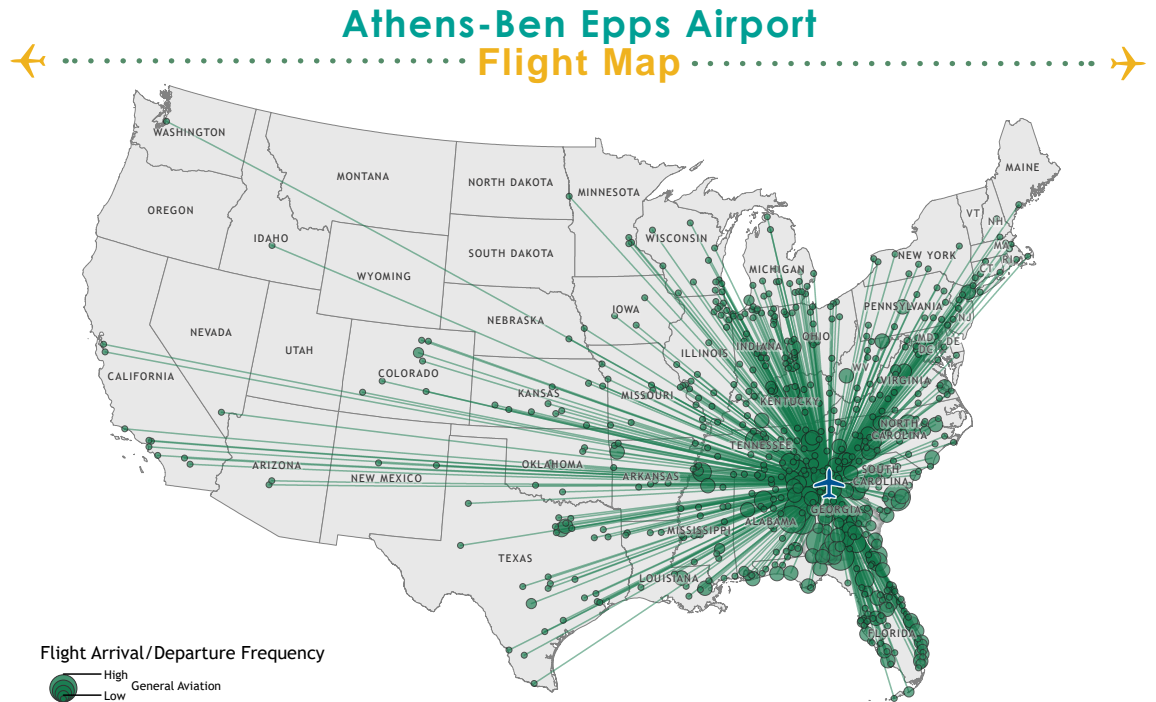
Annual Economic Impacts for Athens-Ben Epps Airport

	Employment	Payroll	Spending	Total Economic Activity
Airport Management & Business Tenants	118	\$4,200,600	\$7,339,700	\$11,540,300
Capital Investment	18	\$543,100	\$2,223,500	\$2,766,600
General Aviation Visitor Expenditures	196	\$5,307,500	\$8,227,200	\$13,534,700
Total	332	\$10,051,200	\$17,790,400	\$27,841,600

Georgia Airports Support Connectivity

A flight from a Georgia airport is a gateway to over 40,000 worldwide airports, including over 19,000 airports in the U.S. alone. When employers seek to relocate or expand, proximity to an airport is among the top 10 factors they consider in their decision making. Georgia's tourist industry also depends on the efficiency of air travel.

This map depicts destinations for flights departing from and arriving at **Athens-Ben Epps Airport** on any given day. This information is generated from the FAA's National Offload Program (NOP). Flights represent only a fraction of all destinations that can be reached directly from the airport. The map helps to show how the airport supports the travel needs of businesses, visitors, and residents of the airport's service area.



Top Five Destinations for Athens-Ben Epps Airport

- 1** Atlanta, Georgia
- 2** Brunswick, Georgia
- 3** Savannah, Georgia
- 4** Charleston, South Carolina
- 5** Columbus, Georgia

Statewide Economic Impacts

Shown below are total annual statewide economic impacts. All economic impacts shown in this report for Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport were obtained from a separate study for that airport conducted by the City of Atlanta. As shown, when all Georgia airports are considered, total annual statewide economic impacts are estimated at 450,502 jobs, \$9.2 billion in annual payroll, and \$73.7 billion in annual economic activity.

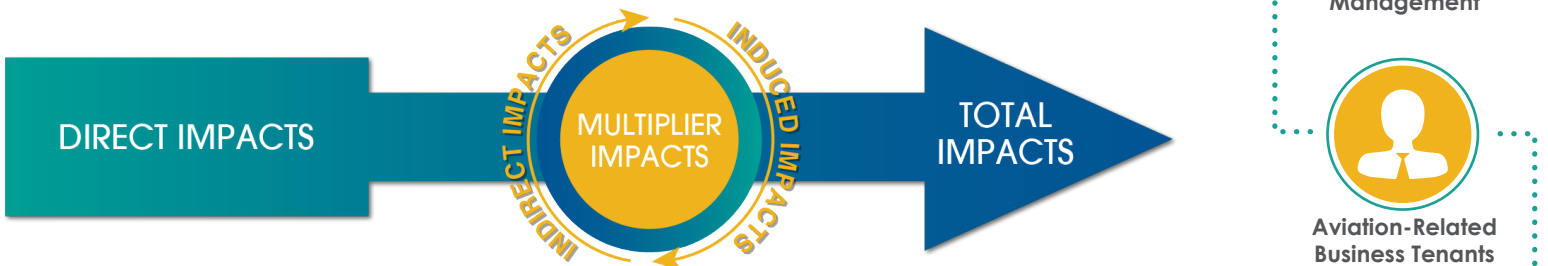
Statewide Economic Impacts All System Airports

	Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport*	Commercial Study Airports	General Aviation Study Airports	State Total
Employment	383,242	52,376	14,893	450,502
Payroll	\$16.7 billion	\$1.3 billion	\$271 million	\$9.2 billion
Economic Activity	\$66.8 billion	\$2.2 billion	\$828 million	\$73.7 billion

*2016-2017 Technical Report, City of Atlanta Economic Impact Study

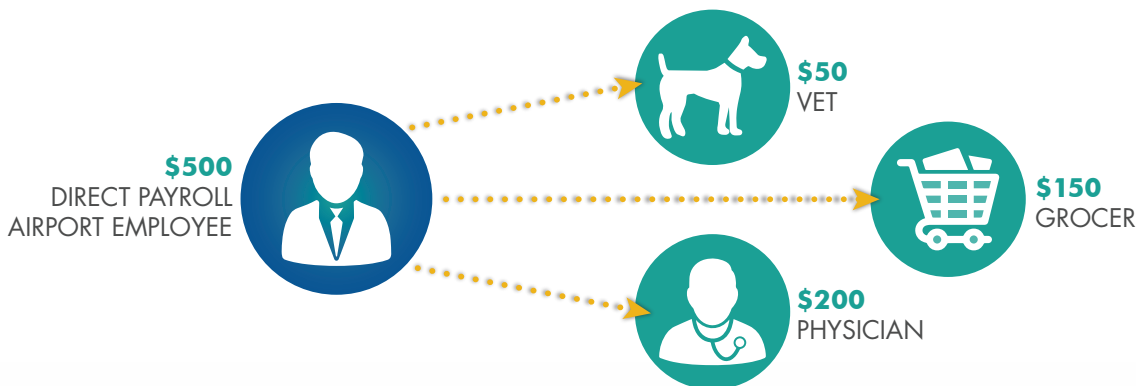
Economic Impact Categories and Measurements

The study identified impacts related to airport management (day-to-day airport operations), aviation-related business tenants, average annual capital investment, expenditures by visitors arriving on general aviation aircraft, and expenditures by visitors arriving on scheduled commercial airline flights. For each of these five categories, impacts were measured for **employment, payroll, spending, and annual economic activity**. Annual economic activity is the sum of payroll and spending. In addition, the study estimated state and local tax revenues that are generated by airport-supported activities.



Study Methodology

Data collection and survey efforts identified **direct** economic impacts in each of the five impact categories using an approved FAA methodology. A state input/output model (**IMPLAN**) was used to estimate additional **indirect and induced** impacts, sometimes referred to as multiplier impacts. Combined, direct plus indirect/induced impacts equal total state or airport specific economic impacts.



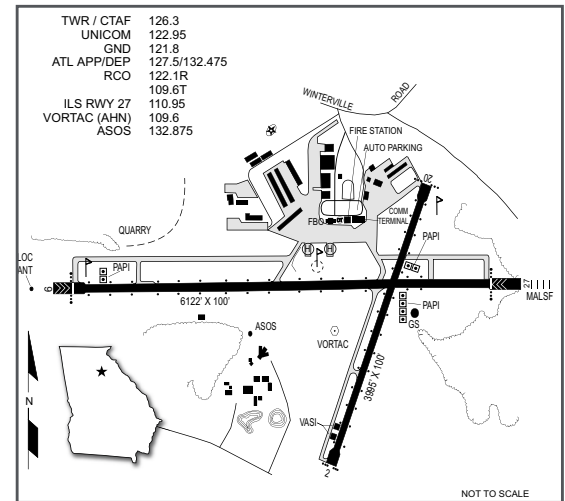
The direct impacts that start at the airport multiply within the state economy. The \$150 of direct impact spent with the grocery results in additional payroll (induced impacts) for the grocer's employees. As the grocery buys supplies, this additional business to business spending results in indirect impacts.

Visitors Arriving on Commercial Flights

Athens-Ben Epps Airport

Athens, the home to the University of Georgia, is located in north Georgia at the intersection of US Highways 29 and 441 in Clarke County. Athens-Clarke County has a population over 115,000, making it one of the largest cities in the state. Athens-Ben Epps Airport is located approximately three miles east of the central business district. The airfield consists of two asphalt runways: Runway 09/27 is 6,122 feet long and Runway 02/20 is 3,995 feet long. Other facilities include an airport rescue and firefighting station, a commercial terminal building completed in 2017, and an air traffic control tower.

Athens Turboprop Management provides quality aircraft maintenance and repair services for aircraft operating at the airport. Falcon Aviation Academy provides flight instruction and is the largest business tenant at the airport. AeroServices, Aircraftsmen, Athens Jet Prop, and C-Ray all provide aircraft maintenance. Services provided by these businesses include aircraft maintenance and management, avionics, flight training, jet aircraft leasing, air taxi/charter flights, aircraft ground servicing, and car rentals. The airport also supports aerial inspections, air cargo, aerial agricultural operations, military exercises, search and rescue, aerial photography and surveys, real estate tours, and aerial banner towing. The Georgia State Police have a base of operations at the airport, and the University of Georgia is a frequent user of the airport.



Examples of How Athens-Ben Epps Airport Supports its Community

There is a good chance you benefit from different activities that the airport supports. Airports support healthcare and emergency services. Airports support the state's agricultural and forestry industries, and power companies rely on airports to keep electricity flowing. State and federal agencies use airports to protect the environment, and law enforcement benefits from airports. Businesses throughout Georgia rely on airports to improve their efficiency. Examples of how the airport benefits the community follow.

Business Use: Airports are tools used by a wide variety of employers to increase many aspects of their efficiency. When businesses consider where they locate or expand, proximity to an airport is often a top consideration. Airports are also a contributor to an area's economic diversification and growth. Both local and visiting businesses rely on air travel to increase their efficiency. Airports help companies expand their market areas, reduce employee travel time, provide access for customers and suppliers, and tie together offices in multiple locations. Athens has major employers that are growing and expanding, continuing the area's traditions of manufacturing and bioscience. With the University's pipeline of talent, it is not surprising that new businesses are being attracted to the area. The airport is available to support leading area business such as Pilgrim's Pride, DialAmerica, Power Partners, Inc., Carrier Transcold, ABB, Boehringer Ingelheim, burton+Burton, SKAPS, CertainTeed, Accurus Aerospace Corporation, Evergreen Packaging, Nakanishi Metal Works Co., Ltd., Landmark Properties, and Eaton Superchargers. The airport assists many sectors of the local economy.

Educational Support: Local airports support area colleges and universities. Institutions use airports to facilitate their philanthropic outreach efforts, and sports teams (including visiting teams) often travel by air. Visiting professors or lecturers use local airports to decrease their travel time, and students and their parents sometimes use air travel. Local airports support the travel needs of college staff who attend seminars and training; airports support student recruitment efforts and help to expand and diversify a college's market area. Founded in 1785, the University of Georgia is one of the oldest colleges in Georgia. Their Division I athletics programs are nationally ranked and are frequent users of the airport. The University has staff and faculty that approach 10,800 and a student enrollment of 39,000, making the University bigger than many cities in the state. By supporting this major institution, the airport helps to add value to the community. The University of Georgia utilizes the airport for most all of their college team charters including football, basketball, baseball, softball, and volleyball. These University related activities add to airport revenues.

Law Enforcement: The airport supports essential law enforcement activities. The Georgia State Patrol (GSP) Aviation Division uses the airport and operates 24/7 to provide air support for different assignments. GSP supports public safety interests for the citizens of Georgia. The GSP Aviation Division performs search and rescue missions utilizing infra-red cameras, and many missing persons have been located from the air using this technology. Other missions supported by the GSP Aviation Division include manhunts, aerial photography, aerial surveillance, natural disaster response, SWAT missions, and fire suppression. The Division has also become a nationwide leader for its innovative use of aircraft to suppress the distribution of illegal substances.

Airport Overview: Athens-Ben Epps Airport is home to Georgia's first aviator, Ben Epps and was the first civilian airport in the state, established in 1919. Today it's a public-use airport certificated under 14 CFR Part 139 with two runways, an air traffic control tower, modern commercial passenger terminal, general aviation terminal, and full-services amenities to accommodate nearly any aircraft. The airport also has space to expand and improve its facilities in the future. The airport is home to several flight schools and aviation maintenance repair businesses that are available to handle all types of general aviation aircraft.

THIS DOCUMENT WAS PREPARED BY

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Data collection and analysis for this study took place before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. Results reflect conditions at Georgia airports prior to that time.

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