



Georgia Department of Transportation



• ECONOMIC IMPACT REPORT FOR •  
**HABERSHAM COUNTY 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 Habersham County Airport and summarizes all Statewide Airport Economic Impacts.

### Annual Economic Impacts for Habersham County 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 Habersham County Airport and other airport benefits. Key impacts for the Habersham County Airport follow.

- Annual Visitors **12,173**
- Employment Supported **98**
- Annual Payroll **\$2,958,800**
- Annual Spending **\$9,000,800**
- Annual Economic Impact **\$11,959,600**
- Airport-Supported Annual State & Local Sales & Income Tax Revenues **\$446,940**

### Economic Impacts for Habersham County Airport

The table below provides information on the sources of annual economic impact estimated for the Habersham County Airport. For more information on the impacts reported here, consult the study's Technical Report available at [dot.ga.gov/IS/AirportAid](http://dot.ga.gov/IS/AirportAid).

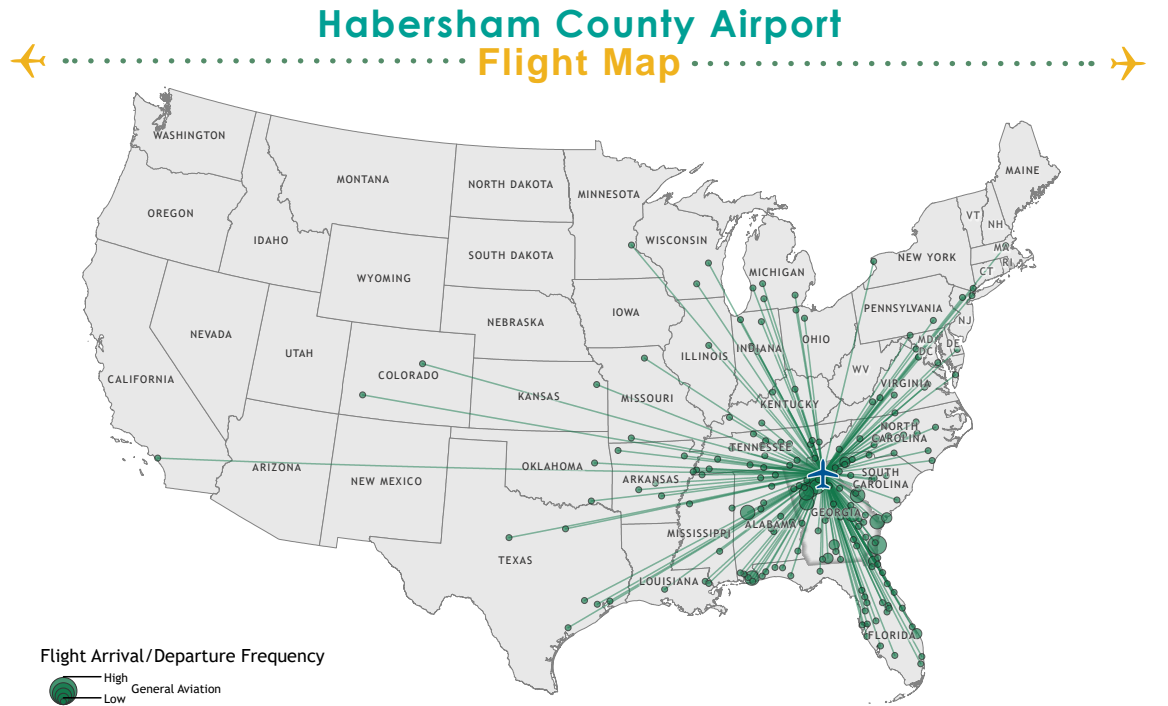
#### Annual Economic Impacts for Habersham County Airport

	Employment	Payroll	Spending	Total Economic Activity
Airport Management & Business Tenants	20	\$664,900	\$1,605,000	\$2,269,900
Capital Investment	49	\$1,509,600	\$6,180,100	\$7,689,700
General Aviation Visitor Expenditures	29	\$784,300	\$1,215,700	\$2,000,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>\$2,958,800</b>	<b>\$9,000,800</b>	<b>\$11,959,600</b>

### 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 US 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 Habersham County 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 Habersham County Airport

- 1** Brunswick, Georgia
- 2** Atlanta, Georgia
- 3** Savannah, Georgia
- 4** Augusta, Georgia
- 5** Tuscaloosa, Alabama

## 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.

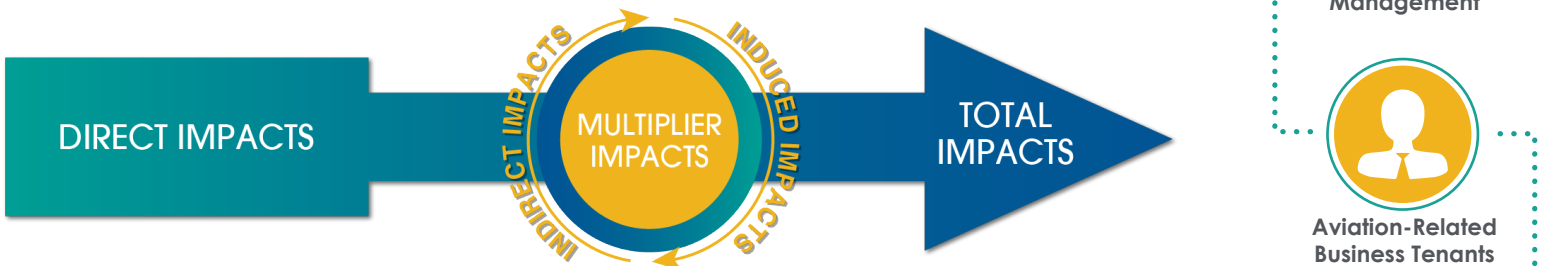
### Statewide Economic Impacts All System Airports

	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

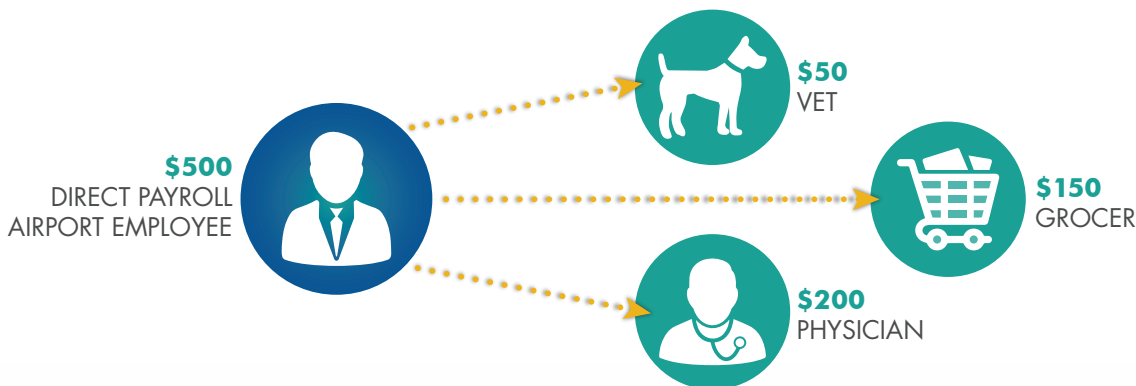
## Economic Impact Categories and Measurements

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.



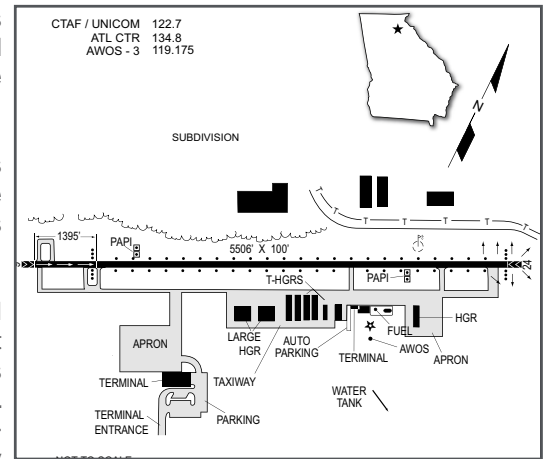
The direct impacts that start at the airport multiply within the state economy. The \$150 of direct impact spent with the grocery results in additional payroll (induced impacts) for the grocer's employees. As the grocery buys supplies, this additional business to business spending results in indirect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

Visitors Arriving on Commercial Flights

Habersham County Airport is located at the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in North Georgia. The airport is located near the town of Cornelia which is situated at the intersection of U.S. Highways 23 and 441, just west of the Chattahoochee National Forest. Cornelia is the largest city in Habersham County.

The Habersham County Airport serves as a gateway for visitors to the numerous area attractions such as Tallulah Gorge State Park, Black Rock Mountain State Park, Lake Russell, and Chattahoochee National Forest. Habersham County's economy is heavily dependent upon the textile, poultry, and apple industries.

The Habersham County Airport is located two miles west of Cornelia's central business district and is owned and operated by Habersham County. The airport has two business tenants. Air Methods is an emergency medical services provider. Blue Sky Aviation functions as the airport's fixed based operator (FBO). They provide a variety of aircraft maintenance and fueling services. The newly-constructed 3,000 square-foot airport terminal building opened in January 2019 and features a break area, conference room, pilot's lounge, and crew rest area. The airport supports emergency medical evacuations, forest firefighting, law enforcement flights, search and rescue operations, aerial photography and surveys, real estate tours, and aerial advertising. Several community events are hosted by the airport. Additionally, the airport serves as a meeting place for community organizations and local government functions.



### Examples of How Habersham County 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.

**Emergency Medical Support:** AirLife Georgia 2, a division of Air Methods, is based at the former Habersham County Airport terminal building. The base is staffed by 14 crew members, including pilots, flight nurses, flight paramedics, and mechanics. This is a new base for the operator that helps ensure residents in Habersham County and the surrounding areas have access to air medical services. The location helps facilitate quicker response times during emergency and trauma situations. During missions, highly trained medical teams care for patients with lifesaving interventions. These range from providing trauma care after an accident to administering clot-busting medications that must be given shortly after a major stroke to significantly improve the patient's longer-term prognosis. With the continued consolidation of hospitals and the trend towards centers with specialized heart or neurological care, the clinical support and speed of missions is critical to giving patients the best possible outcomes. "We are consistently reviewing ways that we can support our residents with the best possible resources, including medical options," stated Habersham County Manager Phil Sutton. He believes this program, based at the airport, provides citizens with the best opportunity available to reach a trauma center within the critical golden hour, the period of time following a traumatic injury during which there is the highest likelihood that prompt medical and surgical treatment will prevent death.

**Tourism/Recreation:** There are many parts of Georgia that attract visitors on a regular basis. As the state's economic impact study has documented, visitors who arrive in Georgia by air have significant spending that supports jobs and payroll associated with these jobs. Within the airport's market area, Valhalla Resort and Innsbruck Resort and Golf Club attract a significant number of visitors, some who arrive by air. The Soque River, a small winding river that runs down from the Blue Ridge mountains in Habersham County, is a popular fishing destination for trout fishermen. Brigadoon Lodge is a private trout fishing resort near the Soque River that also attracts many visitors to the area each year. Other visitors come to fish with Black Hawk Fly Fishing. All visitors who arrive by air have local spending that benefits local employers.

**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 can be used to help companies expand their market areas, reduce employee travel time, provide access for customers and suppliers, and tie together offices in multiple locations. Businesses that rely on and benefit from the airport include Windstream, OK Foods, and Ankony Farms. Windstream is a telecommunications company. OK Foods produces eggs that are sent to Mexico to hatch as broilers. Ankony Farms breeds Angus bulls; buyers from around the world can reach this unique farm via the airport. By supporting these local and visiting businesses, the airport helps support many sectors of the local economy.

**Agency Use:** Many state agencies rely on aviation to support their missions. Some of the agencies that rely on the airport on a regular basis include Georgia Forestry Commission, Georgia Power, Georgia State Police, and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Each of these agencies have their own flight departments. These agencies use the airport to support a wide variety of activities that encompass environmental protection, law enforcement, public safety, and powerline patrols. Without the support of the airport, the efficiency of these agencies and their ability to function would be compromised.

#### 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.*

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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