

# General Aviation gets a boost in Alabama with opening of new Guntersville runway

June 20, 2015 — GUNTERSVILLE, AL

After 15 years of planning and implementation, the first 4,000 feet of the new 5,005-foot Guntersville, Alabama Municipal Airport (8A1) runway opened Saturday, June 20, with a dedication and ribbon cutting ceremony that drew a crowd estimated at 200 people. The expanded facility also includes an interim office and two new 10-unit T-hangars, with more hangars and a new terminal building planned.

The airport is uniquely situated on 69,000-acre Lake Guntersville, and right across the highway from Guntersville's Conners Island Business Park. The final 5,000-plus foot runway, providing small jet capability, and the airport's growing reputation as a seaplane hub, are expected to provide an economic boost to the North Alabama mountain-lakes community.

Construction on the final 1,005 feet is scheduled to begin this August. At the dedication ceremony Guntersville Mayor Leigh Dollar explained why the project was divided into two phases.

"This allowed the old runway to remain open during construction, and I must say business has been good during this time," the mayor said.

Official speakers included Rep. Robert Aderholt, followed by Dennis Roberts, FAA Regional Director from Atlanta, and Dr. John Eagerton, Director of ALDOT Bureau of Aviation.

Rep. Aderholt noted the cooperation and teamwork that was evident in such a successful project.

"This is an instance where we got it right," Aderholt said. "The federal, state and local officials all working together for good investment in a community's future."

The FAA's Dennis Roberts echoed the congressman's remarks, noting, "This has been a great partnership and a real success for FAA, ALDOT and the City of Guntersville. This airport will have a tremendous economic impact on the whole area."

In addition to the general excitement of a 15-year project finally coming to fruition, the crowd received a special treat. Dan Fordice, son of former Miss. Gov. Kirk Fordice, did a fly-over in his restored World War II P-51 Mustang named "Charlotte's Chariot II" prior to the event, and later spoke to the crowd.

"I was here for the first time a month ago at your splash-in, and I was blown away by what a fantastic facility you have here. I go to airports all over the country and this is something special," Fordice said.



*Rep. Robert Aderholt speaking at Dedication Ceremony.*



*Special guest Dan Fordice and Charlotte's Chariot II.*