

THE TRI-CITIES WILL DEDICATE A NEW HALF-MILLION DOLLAR

AIR TERMINAL BUILDING ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10.

We invite you to come to Pasco to give on-the-spot news coverage of the dedication of the new Tri-Cities Air Terminal building to be held on Saturday, December 10, 1966, at 2 p.m. at the airport in Pasco.

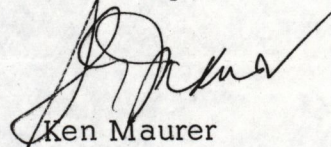
The dedication will also note the completion of airport improvements worth a million dollars and commemorate the 40th anniversary of the first Northwest airmail flight that took place from the Pasco airport.

A round-up story on the dedication, the terminal building and the airmail flight is enclosed for your reference purposes.

Still photos of the terminal will be sent to you.

If we can help you with arrangements for a visit here, to cover the dedication, please let me know.

Sincerely,



Ken Maurer

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## TRI-CITY AIRPORT DEDICATION

### INFORMATION -- 40th ANNIVERSARY, FIRST AIRMAIL FLIGHT FROM PASCO, WASH.

(Some of material covered in accompanying release)

PASCO, WASHINGTON -- The daring young fliers and biplane days of 1926 will be remembered in Pasco this Saturday (Dec. 10) at dedication ceremonies for the Tri-Cities new half-million dollar airport terminal building.

It was from here that Leon Cuddeback moved slowly onto a dusty, sagebrush lined runway in a 90 horsepower Swallow biplane at 6:23 a.m. 40 years ago, gunned his motor and lifted into the air on his way toward Elko, Nevada to establish the first scheduled contract air mail route in the nation. The date was April 6, 1926.

Cuddeback and members of the Pasco Chamber of Commerce with some help from school children had cleared the sagebrush from the 600 foot runway just a few days before the historic flight took place.

He had learned to fly in 1921 at the Varney School of Aviation in San Mateo, California. After his solo flight Cuddeback stayed on as an instructor at the school.

When Walter Varney, Cuddeback's boss, decided to apply for a government postal contract made possible by the Kelly Airmail Act of 1925, Cuddeback was made chief pilot.

Varney entered a bid of eight-cents an ounce. He was unopposed in bidding on what was regarded by others in the industry as a "nowhere to nowhere" air route between Pasco and Elko, Nevada via Boise, Idaho.

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Several Spokane citizens, including Postmaster T. J. Smith, rode on the stagecoach to protect the mail. And they were needed to ward off a "holdup" near Wallula by three bandits.

Portland also played a big part in the opening day ceremonies. The Portland delegation, headed by Postmaster John M. Jones, who arrived aboard an Army plane piloted by Lt. Oakly Kelly of Fort Vancouver, Washington, presented Pasco Mayor H. B. Jensen with a 300 pound marble monument commemorating Portland's participation in the inaugural.

The monument was placed adjacent to the hanger which housed Varney's planes in Pasco. When the original buildings were relocated it was dug up and is now imbedded near the entrance to the new Tri-Cities Airport Terminal.

Since that first flight by Cuddeback there have been many claims and counterclaims by other airlines, each claiming the honors which have been accorded Cuddeback.

Most of the claims are based on technicalities surrounding the claim that Cuddeback might not have arrived at Elko on schedule. Others contend that he went down in the mountains enroute and didn't actually get to Elko at all.

But regardless of claims, Cuddeback's flight is generally regarded by American air historians to be authentic.

From that early group of airmail contractors which flew routes similar to Cuddeback's several went on to achieve leadership in the budding American aviation industry. Among them are Boeing, Trans World Airlines and Western Airlines.



Varney Airlines, for which Cuddeback flew, later merged with three other companies to form United Airlines, the largest commercial carrier in the world today.

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### Tri-Cities Airport Terminal Dedication

PASCO, WASHINGTON --- The new half-million dollar Tri-City airport passenger terminal will be dedicated here Saturday, December 10, on the site of the Northwest's first airmail flight made 40 years ago.

Joseph H. Tippetts, Los Angeles, director of the western region, Federal Aviation agency, will be the speaker at the public dedication ceremonies scheduled for 2 p.m. (December 10) at the airport in Pasco.

The 40th anniversary of the first Northwest airmail flight made from Pasco April 6, 1926, will be commemorated by William Lindsay, Jr., chairman of the Pasco Airmail Commemorative committee.

Also taking part in the ceremonies will be Secretary of State Lud Kramer; Robert Philip, president of the Tri-City Nuclear Industrial Council; State Senator Mike McCormack, and Byron Baker, president of the Port of Pasco, owner-operators of the airport.

Cutting of the ribbon to open the new building will be done by Chryl McKinnis, Miss Tri-Cities. Open house will follow the dedication ceremony.

The new terminal building is part of a \$1-million overall improvement project just completed by the Port of Pasco, at the Tri-Cities airport. Included was the lengthening of runways and taxiways to accommodate West Coast airlines new DC-9 jets, and installation of new high-intensity airport lighting. More than 2,300 feet of new taxi-ways to connect with the 5,800 feet runways were built.

The new terminal has been relocated at the opposite end of the air field near the Columbia Basin College campus and the Pasco municipal golf course.



The new location provides easier accessibility to the Tri-City towns of Kennewick, Richland, and Pasco.

The new two-story, 192 by 72-foot terminal building uses a sweeping design to match the swept wing jets that land near by. For the terminal, 42 hyperbolic parabolic shells of pre-stressed, pre-cast concrete are used, each supported by a central column. The building's exterior is marble, concrete and glass with a balcony that serves as an outside observation deck.

Inside the terminal a metal stairway leads from the main floor to the mezzanine and the observation deck. At the base of the stairway an indoor pool reflects the huge modernistic chandelier that hangs overhead.

Included in the terminal building is a new restaurant and cocktail lounge.

Although Pasco's \$8-million airport is owned by the Port of Pasco, neighboring port districts and municipalities have aided in its recent improvement. To cover the just completed \$1-million dollar-plus projects, the Port of Pasco put in \$600,000 with the Federal Government providing \$250,000. An additional \$200,000 was needed before work could start.

Extraordinarily, community cooperation proved to be the answer. The City of Pasco gave \$100,000; the Port of Kennewick, \$50,000; the Port of Benton, \$25,000, and the city of Richland, \$25,000 so that the airport improvement could be done.

The original airport in Pasco was a sagebrush and sand flat, cleared by hand in one weekend, 40 years ago, by Pasco Chamber of Commerce members and some volunteer school children helpers.

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The field was quickly needed so that a 90-horsepower plane could land and take off with the first airmail ever flown in the Northwest.

The date was April 6, 1926, when pilot Leon Cuddeback took off in his open cockpit Swallow biplane for Elko, Nevada, from the Pasco airport.

It was a memorable day at the Pasco airport in 1926. The watching crowd was estimated at 5,000, with six bands and all major cities in the Northwest represented.

Portland sent its mail in five planes along with a large delegation. Just before takeoff time, a plaque commemorating the occasion was presented by the Portland group. The marble plaque is now in its permanent place at the entrance to the new terminal.

Varney airlines, which flew the original Elko to Pasco mail contract run, was one of four airlines that merged in 1931 to form United airlines.

During World War II, the airport at Pasco was taken over by the navy as a flight training station. The navy constructed over 100 buildings, plus 8 runways and at one time had 4,000 men and 300 planes operating from the base.

After World War II, the navy base was deactivated and was transferred from government ownership to the city of Pasco in 1947. On January 1, 1963, the Port of Pasco took over the airport.

The 1,800 acre facility has over 500,000 square feet of industrial buildings plus many acres for plant sites. There are now 270 employees working in 50 different businesses operating on airport property.



During 1949, which was the first year of post-war operation of a commercial airline serving Pasco, there were 3,000 passengers loaded. Last year, 26,521 boarded West Coast planes in Pasco. West Coast now serves the area with over 100 flights weekly, including DC-9 jet service just inaugurated.

Since its formation in 1941, the Port district, now celebrating its 25th anniversary, has acquired and built property appraised at \$20-million. Included is \$12-million Big Pasco Industrial Park; a \$1-million marine terminal on the Columbia River and the \$8-million airport.

Board of commissioners of the Port district are Byron Baker, president; James A. Keane, vice president, and Del C. Smick, secretary. H.W. Parkinson is general manager and Leland Richardson is airport manager.

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