

**COLUMBIA MISSOURI**  
**AIRPORT ADVISORY BOARD**

**REPORT ON 2025 ACTIVITIES – February 16, 2026**

The Airport Advisory Board (AAB) is currently made up of 9 members:

Randa Rawlins, Chair (representing a major employer within the City)

Eric Morrison, (at-large seat)

Ed Longoria, (representing an educational institution)

Evan (Shane) Messenger (representing the general aviation industry)

Raman Patel (representing the hotel industry)

Mike Burnam (representative of Boone County)

Luke Holtschneider (representative of Jefferson City)

Gary Thompson (representative of the Columbia MO Chamber of Commerce)

Matt Jenne (representative of REDI)

Three non-voting members include Amy Schneider (Convention and Visitors Bureau), Shane Creech (Director of Public Works) and Mike Parks (Airport Manager).

There are currently no vacancies.

Monthly meetings are generally held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month.

Duties and responsibilities include review of airport matters, including financial performance, budgets, capital projects, customer experience, passenger demand analysis, marketing and master planning – and providing input on matters before requests are submitted to the City Council.

This Board is active and engaged, having met 8 times during 2025, all at COU. Board members have also attended events at COU, such as the grand welcoming back of United Airlines in September and the announcement of new service by Allegiant Airlines. The AAB Chair also traveled to American Airlines Headquarters to discuss the need to start a Charlotte route from COU, which ultimately was announced in December 2025.

**Most of AAB meetings consist of reports by the Airport Manager on the progress of operations and projects. He keeps the AAB informed and welcomes input on all issues. There is a good working relationship between the AAB and the Airport Manager. From time to time, individual Board members assist in the review of proposals received in response to RFPs for services.**

**In review, the growth at COU during 2025 was remarkable and will continue during the 2026 year.**

- **United Airlines which had suspended service in 2020, returned with daily flights to Denver and Chicago. United recently announced that beginning in June 2026, they will be doubling their Chicago flights to four times a day.**
- **Allegiant Airlines, a new carrier to COU, announced twice weekly service to Orlando and Destin in Florida, beginning in June 2026.**
- **American Airlines added flights to Dallas and Chicago and announced new daily service to Charlotte beginning in June 2026.**
- **Enplanements in the month of December 2025 were 13,486 compared to 8664 in December 2024, a 56% increase. Enplanements for 2025 in total were 120,744, up from 103,084 in 2024, a 17% increase. Estimates for 2026 are for a 50% increase over 2025.**
- **When the new terminal was opened in 2022, there were 4 boarding gates but only 3 boarding bridges. With the growth of flights in 2026, plans are underway to add the 4<sup>th</sup> boarding bridge. Unfortunately, this will take as much as 2 years for completion.**
- **A new rental car facility, along with COU administrative offices was opened in late 2025.**
- **West parking lots were converted from gravel to asphalt adding 181 paved spaces. A separate employee parking lot has been added to relieve the general public parking demand. Additional parking to meet the needs upcoming in 2026 is in the works.**
- **Plans for repaving of the COU entry road, as well as improved signage have been approved and will be completed soon.**
- **Self-service food options have been made available by Jackson Brothers with kitchen service planned for mid-2026.**
- **The Quotient Group, a nationally recognized niche airport marketing group has provided exceptional service in marketing content, working along side local marketing group Bucket Media for distribution of the content.**
- **The last COU Master Plan was in 2009. COU is currently working in conjunction with Burns and McDonnell, as well as the FAA, to complete a new master plan. A final approved plan was anticipated in late 2025, but was delayed by the lengthy government shutdown.**

- **Airport staff and an outside consultant are working on a business plan to assist in benchmarking airport fees and other revenue sources as COU moves forward.**
- **In conjunction with its pilot training program, Moberly Area Community College has initiated introductory classes at COU. This fall flight training will begin and COU expects this to add nearly 15,000 aircraft operations a year. This increased air traffic shows that COU plays an integral part of promoting the mid-Missouri economy and creating job opportunities for our citizens.**
- **Columbia Jet Center, Blackhawk, and Airline Maintenance Service continue to provide services to both general aviation and commercial aircraft. These services remain vital to the smooth operation of COU. Partnerships have become stronger and growth is spread wide through each of these organizations to ensure preparation for the exponential growth that is being seen at COU.**

**There are many projects moving forward to address the incredible growth at COU. Airport staff continue to meet with the network planners of all airlines in hopes of adding new daily service to existing destinations, as well as new destinations. Opportunities are out there and COU needs to be at the table.**

**While COU has reached new heights and will continue to do so in 2026, there is still much work to be done. The Airport Advisory Board encourages the City Manager and City Council to strongly consider additional staffing needs at COU - necessary because of the demonstrated growth and workload of current staff. The airport will double in size from 2025 through 2026 and more growth is already planned in 2027.**

**On behalf of the Airport Advisory Board, please accept our gratitude and thanks for the support COU has received from the City Council and the City Manager. Working with major airlines is a difficult job – and having flexibility to act quickly is necessary. The City Council and City Manager understand the need to be flexible – and that investment in COU is key to the economic vitality of our City and community.**

**A “talking points” document is attached to this report. COU needs everyone to support and promote the advantages of COU.**

**If you have questions, please feel free to reach me at [reinspahr57@gmail.com](mailto:reinspahr57@gmail.com).**

# See You at COU

## Board & Leadership Talking Points

### Our Message:

"See You at COU" isn't just a tagline. It's about choosing local first, supporting Central Missouri's own airport, and realizing the value of time saved, stress reduced, and dollars kept in our region.

Columbia Regional Airport connects Central Missouri to the world with nonstop flights to Orlando (SFB) and Destin-Forth Walton Beach (VPS) on Allegiant; connections through Charlotte (CLT), Chicago (ORD) and Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) on American Airlines; Chicago (ORD) and Denver (DEN) with United Airlines, offering a faster and more convenient way to travel.

### Core Talking Points

#### **Convenience**

- Convenient service for Mid-Missouri travelers. Save time driving and avoid dealing with traffic.
- Free parking is available just steps from the terminal.
- Quick check-in and short TSA lines mean less stress and more time where it matters.
- Nonstop, low-cost flights with Allegiant to SFB and VPS make family getaways and beach vacations simple and affordable.

#### **Connectivity**

- Four major hubs (CLT, DEN, DFW, ORD) provide one-stop access to 200+ global destinations.
- Ideal for business travelers, alumni, Mizzou families, and international visitors.

#### **Capacity & Growth**

- A modern, efficient terminal built for today's traveler.
- Every seat filled strengthens our case for future routes and growth starts with usage.
- Continued investment in parking infrastructure demonstrates momentum and commitment to customer experience.

#### **Community**

- COU is Central Missouri's Airport, serving Columbia, Jefferson City, and the region.
- COU provides a friendly experience with familiar faces and exceptional service.
- Choosing COU supports local jobs, economic growth, and community pride.

#### **Quick Stats**

- Free parking: Short walk from car to gate.
- Three major hubs: 200+ global connections.
- Projects underway: New paved parking, long-term parking process improvements.
- Marketing momentum: Active campaigns, community partnerships, and growing visibility.

#### **Your Role as a Brand Ambassador**

- Be an advocate: Highlight COU's convenience, safety, and local impact when speaking with leaders or travelers.
- Be an educator: Share facts about COU's service, connectivity, and benefits to the region.
- Be a champion: Lead by example and choose COU every time you choose to fly, you help our airport grow.
- Be visible: Mention COU in community conversations, business meetings, and chamber events.