

LaGuardia
Air Traffic Control Tower

CELEBRATING A HISTORY OF EXCELLENCE



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Aviation Administration

Published January 21, 2011

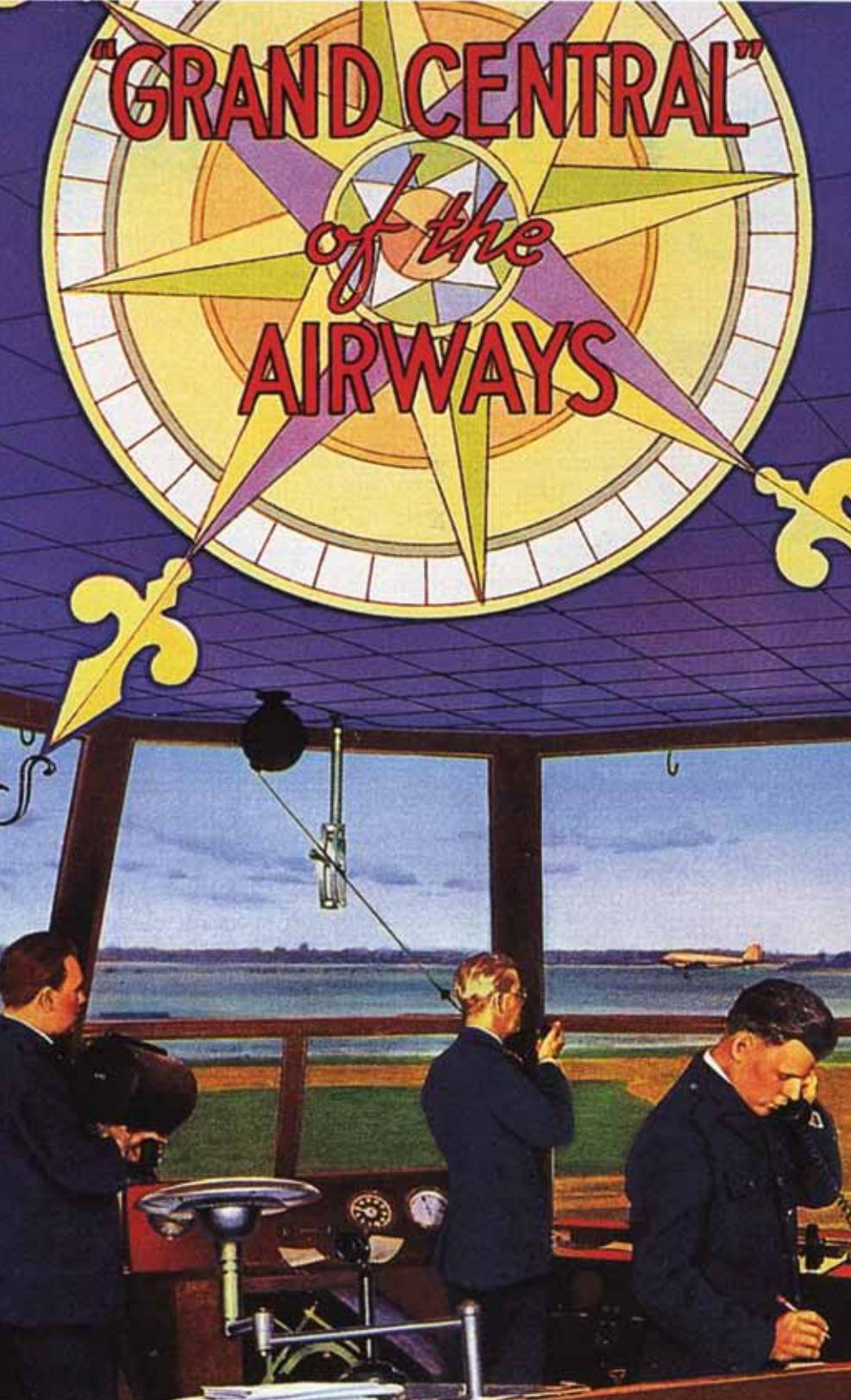


Table of Contents

Introduction	1
LaGuardia History	2
Air Traffic Control Tower Statistics	4
Airport Statistics	5
In the Beginning – Aviation History through Photos	6
Long Island Aviation Firsts	7
Early Air Traffic Control	11
Early Airports	15
The Passenger Experience	19
LaGuardia Airport	23

Jan. 29, 1944

Sent to:

Mr. O. M. Kemp, Pres.
American Airlines, Inc.
100 E. 42nd St., NYC

W. N. Coverdall, Pres.
American Export Airlines, Inc.
25 Bway, NYC

Capt. E. D. Rickenbacker, Pres.
Eastern Airlines, Inc.
10 Rockefeller Plaza, NYC

Mr. Sigmund Janice, Pres.
Colonial Airlines, Inc.
536 Fifth Ave., NYC

Mr. J. T. Trippe, Pres.
Pan American Airways System
135 E. 42nd St., NYC

Mr. W. Patterson
United Airlines Transport Corp.
80 E. 42nd St., NYC

Mr. Jack A. Frye, Pres.
Transcontinental & Eastern Air, Inc.
30 E. 42nd St., NYC

Dear Sir:

This is the last call on the matter of the runway layout at the new Airport.

Thursday, February 3rd, 1944, at my office, City Hall, at 2:30 pm o'clock, come prepared to make any suggestions or forever hold your peace. I have heard some grousing about the present layout which I know is not justified. If you have any cockeyed ideas on tangent runways that have not yet been tried out, keep them for some other time.

I am willing to hear constructive criticism and to receive helpful suggestions. I cannot compete against white tablecloths and soft pencils. Everyone who gets two drinks under his belt is now designing runway layouts on restaurant tables.

We will have a map here, our consulting engineer will be here, and I expect to have the matter finally, completely and definitely settled.

You may bring anyone you desire from your engineering, technical and piloting staff. Lawyers cannot contribute anything. This is not a legal matter.

Very truly yours,

(sgd). F. M. LaGuardia
Mayor

Even after the construction of New York Municipal Airport, Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia remained a staunch advocate of increasing aviation capacity in New York City. New York Municipal Airport opened in 1939 and, in 1943, the City broke ground for Idlewild Airport (later renamed John F. Kennedy International Airport). Although Mayor LaGuardia did not live to see the new airport open in 1948, this letter is indicative of his no nonsense approach to dealing with the aviation community during the construction of the new airport.



Introduction

When the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) air traffic and technical operations staff moved into the new air traffic control tower at LaGuardia Airport they not only found themselves in a bigger, more modern building, they also discovered a permanent exhibit highlighting aviation history from the earliest pioneers and their aircraft to the first airports, navigation aids, the passenger experience, and the airport's history. The exhibit includes approximately 300 aviation photographs, advertisements, and travel posters along with museum-style captions and headings. In addition, LaGuardia's and New York's aviation history is detailed in five photo montages.

The history exhibit, the vision of LaGuardia's tower manager, Leo Prusak, and engineered by FAA historian Theresa Kraus and graphic designer Laurie Zaleski, celebrates the aviation industry and depicts its early growth. Now, employees and visitors alike can trace the history of aviation from the earliest days of the Wright Brothers and gain a better understanding of why and how the FAA provides service to the American public and the users of the national airspace system. As tower manager Prusak has noted "Not only is the visual impact of the exhibit astounding, but it has everyone in the building – both air traffic and tech ops – talking and sharing experiences. The older employees are taking a walk down memory lane, while our younger employees are gaining a better understanding of where the FAA and air traffic control came from. Visitors are also gaining a better sense about the breadth and types of work FAA does on a day-to-day basis."

To celebrate FAA and its LaGuardia Airport employees – past, present, and future – this booklet outlines the airport's history and

accomplishments and includes copies of some of the photographs in the air traffic control tower's history gallery. The photos have been provided by the FAA and the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey.



1947 LaGuardia Air Traffic Control Tower

LaGuardia History

1929 – Gala Amusement Park, owned by the Steinway family, is sold and transformed into the 105-acre private Glenn H. Curtiss Airport – later renamed North Beach Airport

1934 – New York City Mayor Fiorella LaGuardia made it his mission to build a public airport close to the city, and with the press in tow, refused to get off a plane in Newark, NJ, because his ticket read “New York.”

1937 – New York City takes over North Beach Airport and begins a major expansion project built with \$45 million from the Works Progress Administration, making the airport the first in the United States to be financed, designed, and built in full partnership with the federal government. New York City Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia held a ground breaking ceremony on September 9, for the enlarged, public airport, which required filling in 357 acres of waterfront.

1939 – New York City dedicates the New York Municipal Airport on October 15. The 558-acre airdrome includes six hangars, each large enough to house a football gridiron with room for bleachers; six restaurants, one with cocktail lounge and nightclub; offices for rent by the day to busy executives; a sound-proofed engine test building; the finest seaplane terminal in the world where trans-Atlantic planes can dock in the roughest weather. The field also has expensive navigation aids, such as a stop-go traffic light system for taxiing planes and a control tower located on top of the central terminal fitted with 16 radio receivers to hear calls on any airline frequency.

1939 – On November 2, the city renames the airport New York Municipal Airport-LaGuardia Field. The Civil Aeronautic Authority designates the airport a co-terminal, along with Newark airport, for the New York-Northeastern New Jersey metropolitan district on November 7.

1939 – New York City Municipal Airport officially opens to commercial traffic on December 2.

1940 – On January 12, the Civil Aeronautics Authority (CAA) amends Civil Aeronautics Regulation #53 to reflect the airport’s new name, New York Municipal Airport-LaGuardia Field.

1940 – Radio station WSY, the Civil Aeronautics Authority’s first overseas and foreign airways communications station began regular operations on February 9. Capable of two-way radio communications with aircraft flying the Atlantic Ocean, the powerful facility could also communicate with various points in Europe, Bermuda, and Newfoundland. A CAA office at La Guardia Airport operated both receivers and transmitters by remote control.

1940 – The Marine Air Terminal opens and on March 31 a Pan American Airways clipper makes the first flight from the terminal.

1947 – On June 1, New York City leases the airport to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and the airport is renamed LaGuardia Airport.

1947 – The CAA begins in-service testing of a ground controlled approach radar system at LaGuardia, the third airport to undertake such tests.

1948 – The CAA begins operating the air traffic control tower at LaGuardia Airport.

1952 – Helicopter service begins on October 15 when New York Airways initiates a regular mail run between LaGuardia, Newark, and New York International Airport.

1956 – In June, the CAA completes installation of the first radar in a program to “circular polarize” airport surveillance at LaGuardia Airport. The modification program would permit the radar to “see” aircraft passing through rain and snow.

1957 – The Port Authority begins a reconstruction and improvement program, which would include a three-story terminal building, a new control tower, a new southeast-northwest runway, a two-level terminal roadway, and an enlarged parking area next to the new terminal. Construction on the new air traffic control tower began in 1960.

1964 – On April 17, the Port Authority dedicates its \$36 million upgrade, including the new, 150-foot high control tower. The Federal Aviation Agency begins operating from the new tower in May. The airport opens to scheduled air carrier jet operations on June 1.

1968 – The nation’s first STOLport (short takeoff and landing facility) for commercial aircraft in the United States opens at LaGuardia Airport. The STOLport, 1,095 feet long, is used for VFR flying only.

1983 – Delta Air Lines opens its new terminal in June.

1984 – The Port Authority institutes a perimeter rule that bans flights to cities more than 1,500 miles away.

1992 – The 12-gate US Airways terminal opens on September 12.

2004 – The City of New York extends the Port Authority lease through 2050.

2006 – The FAA begins construction on a new air traffic control tower on December 4.

2010 – The FAA begins operations at the new tower on October 10.

2011 – FAA officially dedicates the new tower on January 21.

Air Traffic Control Tower Statistics



Tower #1:

Opens: 1939

Location: Top of Central Terminal Building

Owned: City of New York; 1947 leased to Port Authority of New York and New Jersey

Operated by: City of New York; 1947 Port Authority of New York and New Jersey; 1948 Civil Aeronautics Authority

Equipment: 16 radio sets



Tower #2

Opens: 1964

Owned: Port Authority of New York and New Jersey

Operated by: Federal Aviation Agency; 1967 Federal Aviation Administration

Control Cab Floor Height: 127 feet

Control Cab Size: 460 square feet

Cab Controller Positions: 11

Administrative & Support Space: 12,200 square feet



Tower #3

Opens: 2010

Owned: Federal Aviation Administration

Operated by: Federal Aviation Administration

Control Cab Floor Height: 198 feet

Control Cab Size: 850 square feet

Cab Controller Positions: 11

Administrative & Support Space: 17,380 square feet

Airport Statistics

Year	Plane Movements	Passengers	Air Cargo (tons)	Air Mail (tons)
1949	159,465	3,284,213	36,061	13,585
1960	191,736	2,935,613	58,313	10,557
1970	297,652	11,845,141	39,815	24,119
1980	317,633	17,467,962	35,257	47,654
1990	356,358	22,764,604	70,792	58,033
2000	384,554	25,360,034	20,195	58,254
2001	367,871	22,519,874	16,474	43,771
2002	362,649	21,986,679	11,709	23,818
2003	374,952	22,482,770	12,333	18,981
2004	398,957	24,435,619	14,096	15,219
2005	405,175	25,889,390	16,006	10,296
2006	399,827	25,810,603	13,998	5,718
2007	391,547	24,985,264	9,595	2,087
2008	378,908	23,076,903	8,889	2,635
2009	354,048	22,142,336	6,712	1,349

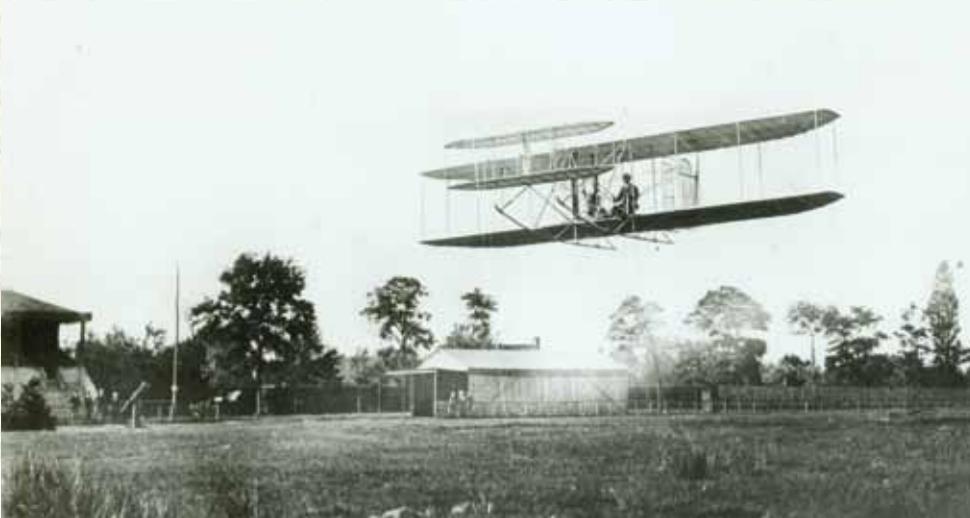
Source: Port Authority of New York and New Jersey

In the Beginning – Aviation History through Photos



1903 Orville and Wilbur Wright at Kitty Hawk, NC

Long Island Aviation Firsts



1909 Wilbur Wright makes the first flight over American waters when he flies over the Hudson River



1910 Glenn Curtiss sets a new speed record flying from Albany to New York City in 2 hours 32 minutes



1911 Harriet Quimby obtains her pilot's license at the Moisant School at the Hempstead Plains Aerodrome, the first American woman to earn an Aero Club of America Aviator's certificate



1918 Operating for the Post Office Department, the U.S. Army flies the first regular air mail service between Washington, DC, and New York City



1922 At Curtiss Field, Bessie Coleman makes her first appearance in an American air show



1923 Leaving from New York, Lieutenants John McReady and Oakley Kelly make the first nonstop transcontinental flight



1927 leaving from Roosevelt Field, Charles Lindbergh makes the first nonstop solo flight across the Atlantic



1929 At Mitchel Field, James Doolittle is the first pilot to use only instrument guidance to take off, fly a set course, and land

1932 Amelia Earhart sets the women's record for the fastest, non-stop transcontinental flight on a flight from Los Angeles to Newark



1933 Wiley Post departs Floyd Bennett Field on the first solo flight around the world



1938 Howard Hughes departs Floyd Bennett Field for his around-the-world flight



1939 – Pan American Airways initiates the first scheduled transatlantic flights from New York to Paris

*1929 The first Air Traffic Controller, Archie League,
at work in St. Louis, MO*



Early Air Traffic Control



1933 Archie League guides an aircraft using a light in the tower



1935 The first Airway Traffic Center is established at Newark, NJ, by a consortium of airlines



1936 Earl Ward (left) organizes the first airway traffic centers



1936 The Chicago Airway Traffic Center opens



1936 A controller works in the Newark air traffic control tower



1943 Controllers work traffic in the airway traffic center at Washington National Airport



1948 Controllers begin using radar at the Washington center



1940s Controllers move "shrimp boats" along a map to manage air traffic



1940s The first effort to automate air traffic control



1940s Women staff the tower at Chicago's Orchard Place Airport/Douglas Field, now called O'Hare International Airport



1940s Women begin working as controllers during World War II



1911 College Park Air Field, MD

Early Airports



1920 Washington Airport, Washington, DC



1932 Floyd Bennett Field, NY



1935, Pan American Terminal Dinner Key, FL



1940 Marine Air Terminal New York Municipal Airport



1945 Idlewild Airport, NY



1941 Los Angeles International Airport, CA



1948 Moroni's Airport, Meridian, CA



1940s Chicago Municipal Airport, IL



1940s Atlanta Municipal Airport, GA

1920s ensuring proper weight and balance prior to takeoff



The Passenger Experience



1928 Passengers and mail board a Fokker transport



1930s United Airlines' first stewardesses are trained nurses



1930s DC-2 interior



1930s United Airport, Burbank, CA, now Bob Hope Airport



1930s United Airlines stewardesses



1930s Air France stewardesses



1930s U.S. Customs Inspection



1940s Passenger waiting area at Los Angeles International Airport



1950s Flight information desk at Friendship Airport, Baltimore, MD, now Baltimore Washington Thurgood Marshall Airport



1960s Passengers line up at the ticket counter



1960s Carry-on bag inspection



1939 New York City Mayor Fiorella LaGuardia looks out from a TWA DC-3, the first aircraft to land at the new airport on December 2

LaGuardia Airport



1939 New York City Municipal Airport opens



1939 TWA stewardess departs the first aircraft to land at the airport



1940s A motorist passes underneath a landing aircraft



1940s A nickel buys a close up view of the airport



1948 The Civil Aeronautics Administration takes over operation of the air traffic control tower from the Port Authority



1949 The Brooklyn Dodgers return to LaGuardia after beating St. Louis in the National League pennant race



1951 The "Sheep Run" serves auxilliary passengers



1952 Helicopter service begins between LaGuardia, Newark, and New York International airports



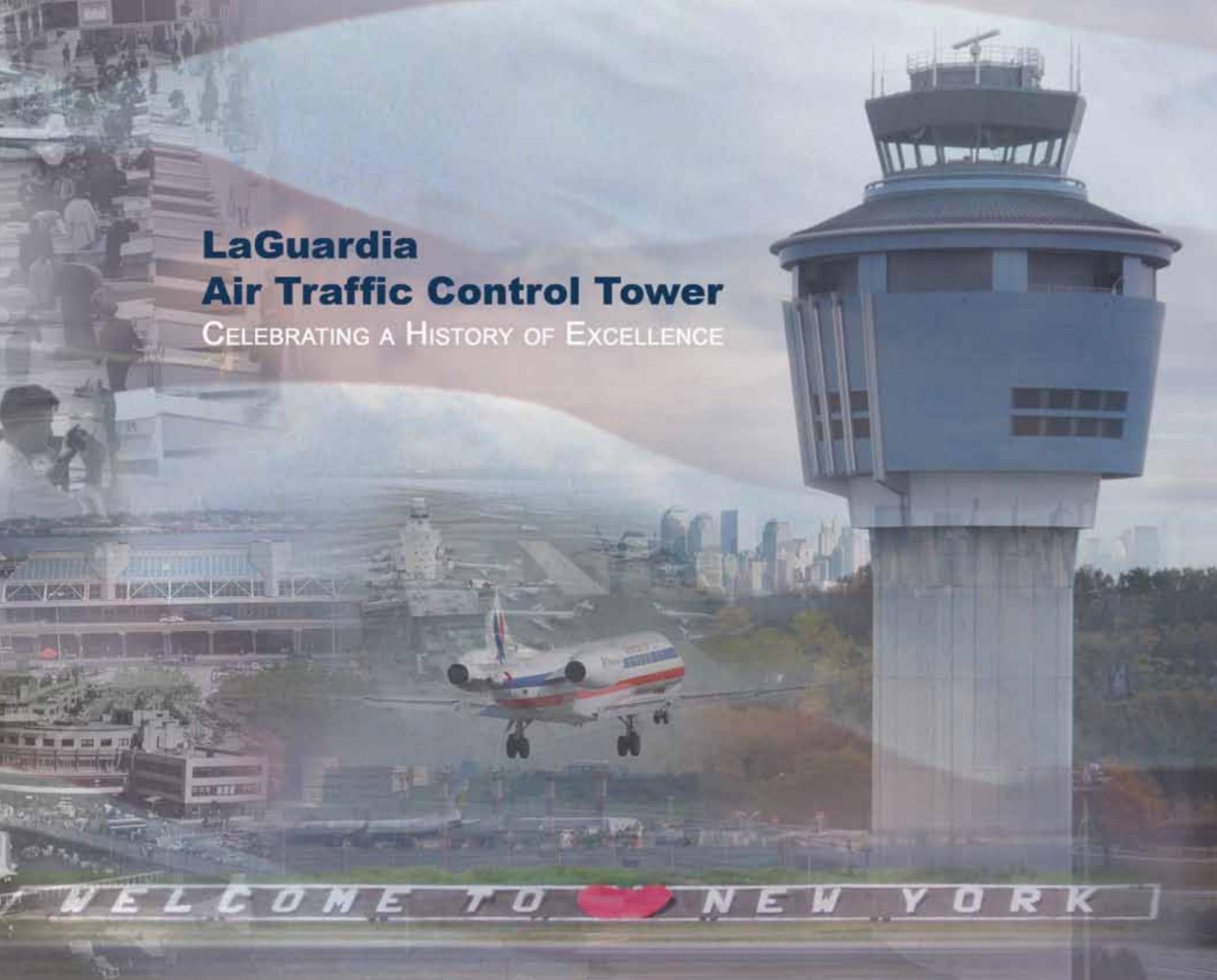
1964 The new, 150-foot high air traffic control tower opens



LA GUARDIA
AIRPORT

U-AIRWAYS





LaGuardia
Air Traffic Control Tower

CELEBRATING A HISTORY OF EXCELLENCE

WELCOME TO  NEW YORK

