

ADG Celebrates 35 Years of Building Airports

Strong Customer Collaboration and Service Key to Longevity

In an era in which only one in three U.S. businesses survive past their 10th anniversary, according to the U.S. Small Business Administration, Airport Development Group, Inc. (ADG) will celebrate its 35th anniversary of serving airports across the country and internationally on April 30.

In the highly competitive aviation industry, tightly regulated by the federal government, ADG's success can be attributed to a compilation of several skills, but ranking close to the top of the company's priorities are customer collaboration and service.

"One of ADG's guiding fundamental core beliefs is to work so closely with our customers that they think of us as one of their staff or teammates," says Dana P. Hartshorn, P.E., an ADG principal along with co-owner Charles. L. Kellerman Jr., P.E.

"In many smaller communities, the airport manager wears many hats during the work day, so we work closely with them to lift the burden of airport compliance, capital-improvement planning and cost estimating, grant administration and project management off their shoulders," he continued.

On its website, www.adgairports.com, the company is hosting a special congratulatory webpage where friends, colleagues, former employees and patrons can post a message wishing ADG a happy 35th anniversary. Three creative messages will be selected to receive a \$100 gift card to the winner's choice of Home Depot, Lowe's or Menards. Deadline for contest messages is June 30, and messages will stay online for the remainder of 2019.

ADG was founded in 1984 by Peter J. Muller and James E. Sirhall as Muller, Sirhall and Associates. The company's original market orientation continues today as dedicated solely to the aviation industry, offering planning, environmental assessment, design, engineering, project administration and marketing/public relations services to all sizes and operations of airports nationally and internationally. A few years after the company's founding, the original partnership was dissolved in 1995, and Sirhall reorganized the firm under its present name. He retired from ADG in 2014.

Over its long history in a small niche market with a singular customer-focused approach, ADG has completed more than 800 planning, engineering and construction projects at more than 250 airports around the world.

Projects include: pavement inspection for the NASA space shuttle program at Cape Canaveral in Florida; the design, engineering compliance and construction management

of a runway/taxiway complex for the new Denver International Airport in 1992-93; and recently creating designs for a runway construction project on a privately owned island in the Bahamas to support operations of a small business jet for island guests.

“We’re very gratified to have maintained a strong 35-year business presence in this highly competitive aviation sector,” Kellerman explains. “We owe much to a long list of dedicated employees, both past and present, who have embraced our style of taking care of the airport client and helping them achieve their goals.

“In a rapidly changing regulatory environment, our airport partners are busy with enhancing their airports, and our national reputation for service and quality is creating new business opportunities across the country.”

The evolution of digitization in the engineering and planning tasks using computer-aided drafting and design (CADD) software has been one of the greatest changes the industry has experienced, Kellerman said. Kellerman has led the engineering design and construction management team during ADG’s 35 year run, and worked the last two years at Muller, Sirhall & Associates as a project engineer.

Digitization has drastically reduced the volume of printed engineering sets sent to the Federal Aviation Administration and client for review and approval. Now, through the internet, digital file-sharing programs help to move engineering files electronically between partners on a project for rapid review and comment that helps keep the project timeline moving toward on-time completion, Kellerman noted.

ADG’s team approach to project management at each airport it serves has resulted in long-standing partnerships and award-winning projects. The company is



ADG engineers completed pavement inspection task for the NASA space shuttle program Cape Canaveral in Florida.



The ADG team completed a runway/taxiway complex the new Denver International Airport in 1992-93 through engineering design, compliance and construction management.

headquartered in Denver but has regional offices in Jackson, Miss., and Lawrence, Kan.

This collaborative approach has reinvested itself on many occasions for the company over its 35 years, as former employees have returned to work at ADG with enhanced skills and market knowledge. Also, former employees who opened their own specialty aviation businesses have partnered with ADG ownership on client projects when appropriate.

Using this approach, ADG is able to remain a flexibly sized company that can expand its services to clients by adding specialty firms to complete certain tasks without ADG bearing the overhead costs of keeping specialized staff year-round. The end result is a seamless project team that works to keep budgets competitive for the airport client.

“We see a very bright and robust future for airports in the U.S., and each facility we serve brings a unique element to the nation’s airspace,” Hartshorn said. “Our company’s experience and singular focus on airport development offers tremendous advantages over traditional multi-disciplinary firms.”

For more information on ADG’s 35th anniversary, go to www.adgairports.com or view the firm’s LinkedIn page <https://www.linkedin.com/company/6174798/admin/>.

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