

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Today in Texas history

By Bandera Spirits of Texas

On this day in 1969, Houston Intercontinental Airport officially began operations. As of 12:01 that morning, it replaced Hobby Airport, which ceased commercial flights (Hobby was reopened to commercial traffic a couple of years later). Some 80,000 visitors attended the opening ceremonies.

The new airport had its origins in 1957, when the Civil Aeronautics Administration recommended that the city of Houston replace the overloaded Hobby Airport. By 1963 planning for a \$125 million facility, on Houston's north side, was under way.

The new airport opened only after a succession of eight projected opening dates. By 1972 it was apparent that IAH needed many changes. The terminals were not adequate, the runways needed strengthening, the terminal people-carrying systems were in need of major repair, and the parking space was far too small.

A third terminal was completed in the early 1980s. Plans for a fourth were scrapped in favor of a \$95 million international facility, which opened in 1990. In acres, Houston Intercontinental (renamed George Bush Intercontinental Airport in 1997) is Texas's second largest airport, behind Dallas-Fort Worth.