

Brownsville/South Padre Island International Airport

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Brownsville/South Padre Island International Airport (IATA: **BRO**, ICAO: **KBRO**, FAA LID: **BRO**) is a city owned, public use airport located four nautical miles (7 km) east of the central business district of Brownsville, a city in Cameron County, Texas, United States.^[1]

The airport is served by two commercial airlines, six air taxis and offers three fixed base operations (FBOs) for general aviation. It is a convenient airport for flying into the Rio Grande Valley and northern Mexico. Most cities in the Rio Grande Valley are accessible from BRO by automobile within 30–60 minutes via the US 77, US 83, Interstate 69E and Interstate 2 freeway routes. It is also the closest commercial airport to South Padre Island.

This airport included in the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems for 2011–2015, which categorized it as a *primary commercial service* facility.^[2] As per Federal Aviation Administration records, the airport had 82,723 passenger boardings (enplanements) in calendar year 2008,^[3] 80,350 enplanements in 2009, and 84,401 in 2010.^[4]

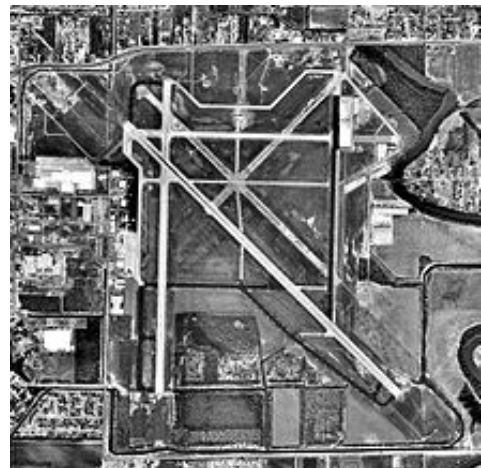
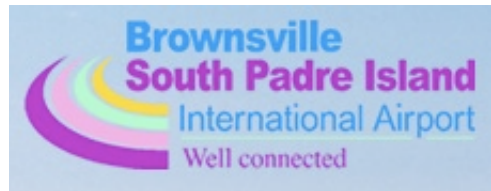
The National Weather Service forecast office for deep south Texas is located on the airport grounds. The airport currently has scheduled nonstop passenger flights to two destinations in Texas: Dallas/Ft. Worth (DFW) and Houston (IAH). New scheduled nonstop passenger service to Las Vegas commenced in June, 2015.

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Brownsville/South Padre Island International Airport

(former Brownsville Army Airfield)



USGS 2002 orthophoto

IATA: BRO – ICAO: KBRO – FAA LID: BRO

Summary

Airport type	Public
Owner	City of Brownsville
Serves	Brownsville / South Padre Island, Texas
Location	Brownsville, Texas
Elevation AMSL	22 ft / 7 m
Coordinates	25°54′25″N 097°25′33″W

Map

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History

- On March 9, 1929, Charles Lindbergh landed at BRO after a five-hour, 38-minute historic flight from Mexico City to the United States. This established the first leg of Airmail Service to Mexico. An event was held on site in Lindbergh's honor, with a crowd of over 20,000 greeting him upon his arrival. Among the attendees was Amelia Earhart, for whom the main street in front of the Airport is named. This event has been described as an international event of great significance.
- Pan American World Airways started service at the airport on June 4, 1929, the beginning of a 30-year relationship between BRO and Pan Am.
- In the 1960s, the 16th weather radar system in the nation was installed at BRO.
- In 1983, the airport was officially renamed the Brownsville-South Padre Island International Airport.
- In 2014, expansion of the existing runway to 10,000 or 12,000 feet (3,000 or 3,700 m) was proposed by the Brownsville City Aviation Director, and the city purchased an additional 8.2 acres (3.3 ha) of land for approximately US\$200,000.^[5]



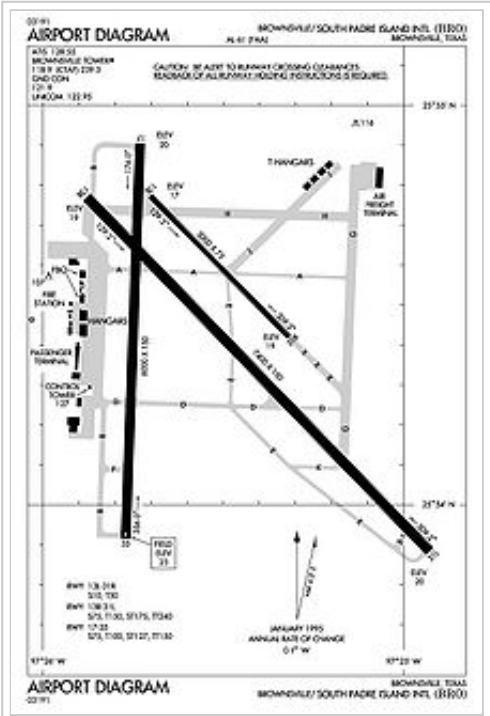
Location of airport in Texas

Runways			
Direction	Length		Surface
	ft	m	
13R/31L	7,399	2,255	Asphalt
17/35	6,000	1,829	Asphalt
13L/31R	3,000	914	Asphalt
Statistics (2011)			
Aircraft operations			37,412
Based aircraft			55
Source: Federal Aviation Administration ^[1]			

Brownsville Army Airfield

During World War II the airport was used by the United States Army Air Forces, although the Air Corps had signed a contract with Pan American Airways in 1940 for the training of aircraft mechanics at the airport. Shortly after the Pearl Harbor Attack on December 7, 1941, both Army and Navy observation aircraft began operations from the airport flying antisubmarine missions over the Gulf of Mexico.

For the first year of the United States' involvement in combat of the war, Pan American continued to operate the airport, providing training to Ferrying Command pilots and ground mechanics assigned to the 18th Transport Transition Training Detachment. With the realignment of Ferrying Command to Air Transport Command on July 1, 1942, plans were made by the Army to assume jurisdiction of the airport. On July 28, 1943 the USAAF 568th AAF



FAA airport diagram

Base Unit, Air Transport Command was assigned to the newly designated **Brownsville Army Airfield**. The mission of the 4th Fighter Operational Training Unit at the airfield was the training of pilots to ferry pursuit planes to the various theaters of war. Training was carried out by AAF instructor pilots, however Pan American Airways retained operations at the airfield flying larger 2 and 4 engine transports to the airport as an overhaul facility. In May 1944, a new mission was developed to train multi-engined pilots at the base. The school began operations in June, and the pilots began to ferry large numbers of aircraft to Panama for subsequent shipment by sealift to Australia.

Achievements of note during World War II at Brownsville AAF were:

- Civilian Pilot Training program initiated to train military and commercial pilots.
- The first American jet engine flight was tested at Brownsville Army Air Field.
- B-29 bombers were renovated on the site.
- The airport had one of the largest overhaul facilities in the country. By the end of the war Pan American had overhauled nearly 6,000 engines.

With the end of the Pacific War in August 1945, operations at Brownsville AAF were dramatically reduced. Flight operations continued at a reduced level for the balance of 1945, however in early January the base was declared surplus and was inactivated on March 5, 1946 and returned to full civilian control.^[6]^[7]

Facilities and aircraft

Brownsville/South Padre Island International Airport covers an area of 1,700 acres (688 ha) at an elevation of 22 feet (7 m) above mean sea level. It has three runways with asphalt surfaces: 13R/31L is 7,399 by 150 feet (2,255 x 46 m); 17/35 is 6,000 by 150 feet (1,829 x 46 m); 13L/31R is 3,000 by 75 feet (914 x 23 m).^[1]

For the 12-month period ending December 31, 2011, the airport had 37,412 aircraft operations, an average of 102 per day: 45% general aviation, 40% military, 14% air taxi, and 1% scheduled commercial. At that time there were 55 aircraft based at this airport: 87% single-engine and 13% multi-engine.^[1]

Several regional jet aircraft types, including the Bombardier Canadair CRJ-200 and Embraer Embraer ERJ 145, are respectively operated by American Eagle (Envoy Air) and United Express (ExpressJet) on behalf of their major air carrier partners American Airlines and United Airlines into Brownsville. Previous aircraft operated for scheduled passenger service into the airport include Embraer ERJ 135, Embraer ERJ 140 and ATR-42 regional jet and turboprop aircraft (flown by Chautauqua Airlines, Envoy Airlines, ExpressJet Airlines) as well as Boeing 737-200, 737-300 and 737-500 mainline jet aircraft (operated by Continental Airlines). Additional aircraft information can be found below in the historical airline service section.

Pan American Airways, Inc. (not to be confused with the original Pan Am) was located in the 1931 Pan American Airways Building at the Brownsville South Padre Island International Airport. The company renovated the 1931 Pan American Airways Building with the intent of re-opening the "Gateway to Latin America" in 2011. That re-opening, however, never happened.

Airlines and destinations

The following airlines serve Brownsville with scheduled passenger service:^[8]

Airlines	Destinations
Allegiant Air	Las Vegas
American Eagle	Dallas/Fort Worth
United Express	Houston-Intercontinental

As of July 2015, Allegiant Air operates McDonnell Douglas MD-80 jetliners on its nonstop services to Las Vegas (LAS) while American Eagle and United Express both fly Embraer ERJ-145 regional jets on their respective nonstop flights to Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW) and Houston (IAH).^{[9][10][11]} The American Eagle and United Express services are both operated via respective code share agreements by ExpressJet.



An ExpressJet Airlines ERJ 145 arriving at the Gate 2 jetway.

Historical airline service

Pan American World Airways (Pan Am) began serving Brownsville in 1929 with a daily flight to Mexico City via Tampico.^[12] By 1950, Pan Am was operating Douglas DC-4 propliner service from the airport to Mexico City via Tampico with continuing service to Guatemala City, Guatemala; Tegucigalpa, Honduras; San Jose, Costa Rica and Panama City, Panama.^[13]

Braniff International Airways and Eastern Air Lines served Brownsville for many years as well. In 1935, Braniff was operating daily Lockheed Model 10 Electra prop service on a routing of Brownsville-Corpus Christi-San Antonio-Austin-Waco-Fort Worth-Dallas.^[14] By 1940, Braniff was operating a flight which the airline called the "The Starlite Express" with a routing of Brownsville-Corpus Christi-San Antonio-Austin-Fort Worth-Dallas-Oklahoma City-Ponca City-Wichita-Kansas City-Chicago flown with a Douglas DC-3.^[15] The Eastern system timetable dated March 1, 1939 contained this announcement: "A New Route to Brownsville and Mexico".^[16] In 1941, Eastern was operating a flight the airline called the "Mexico Silver Sleeper" with a routing of New York City-Washington, D.C.-Atlanta-New Orleans-Houston Hobby Airport-Corpus Christi-Brownsville.^[17] Eastern listed connections in its timetable via Brownsville to Pan Am's service to Mexico at this time.^[17] In 1958, Eastern was operating daily Convair 340 "Silver Falcon" service with a routing of Brownsville-Corpus Christi-Houston Hobby-Beaumont/Port Arthur-Lake Charles-Lafayette-Baton Rouge-New Orleans-Mobile-Pensacola-Montgomery-Birmingham-Atlanta.^[18] By 1965, Eastern's service had become more regional in nature as the airline was operating daily Convair 440 prop service from the airport with a routing of Brownsville-Corpus Christi-Houston-Beaumont-Lake Charles-Lafayette-Baton Rouge-New Orleans.^[19] Trans-Texas Airways (TTa) also served Brownsville. In 1952, TTa was operating daily Douglas DC-3 service with a routing of Brownsville-Harlingen-McAllen-Alice-Corpus Christi-Beeville-Victoria-Houston.^[20] Many years later, TTa would eventually be renamed Texas International Airlines

Scheduled passenger jet service arrived in Brownsville during the mid 1960s. In 1966, Braniff International was serving the airport with new British Aircraft Corporation BAC One-Eleven twin jets with a daily routing of Brownsville-Corpus Christi-San Antonio-Austin-Dallas Love Field-Tulsa-Kansas City.^[21] During the summer of 1967, Braniff was continuing to operate BAC One-Eleven jet service into the airport with a daily routing of Brownsville-Corpus Christi-Houston Hobby Airport-Dallas Love Field-Wichita-

Kansas City-Chicago.^[22] By 1974, Braniff was flying Boeing 727-100 and Boeing 727-200 jetliners nonstop to both Dallas/Ft. Worth (DFW) and Houston Intercontinental Airport (IAH) with direct service to Washington, D.C., Detroit, Amarillo and Lubbock.^[23] In the fall of 1979, Braniff was operating three daily nonstop Boeing 727 flights to Dallas/Ft. Worth with direct one stop service to New York City via John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK) as well as direct one stop flights to Chicago O'Hare Airport (ORD) and Minneapolis/St. Paul (MSP).^[24] In the spring of 1981, Braniff was continuing to operate three daily nonstop Boeing 727 flights to Dallas/Ft. Worth.^[25]

During the summer of 1982, Texas International Airlines (TI), which had recently been acquired by Continental Airlines, was operating two nonstop flights a day to Houston Intercontinental Airport (IAH) with Douglas DC-9-10 jets on behalf of Continental.^[26] One of these TI DC-9 flights operated continuing, no change of plane service to Dallas/Ft. Worth, Albuquerque and Los Angeles (LAX).^[26] By 1983, Continental had begun operating nonstop service to IAH with Boeing 727-100 and McDonnell Douglas DC-9-30 jetliners.^[27] Ozark Air Lines served Brownsville as well during the early and mid 1980s with McDonnell Douglas DC-9-30 jetliners with nonstop flights to both Dallas/Ft. Worth and San Antonio with continuing one stop service to the airline's St. Louis (STL) hub.^[28] In the fall of 1984, Royale Airlines was operating three Douglas DC-9-10 jet flights a day nonstop to Houston Intercontinental Airport (IAH) via a passenger feed agreement with Continental Airlines.^[29] In the summer of 1985, Muse Air was operating nonstop service to Houston Hobby Airport (HOU) with five flights a day as well as direct service to Dallas Love Field (DAL) and Tulsa with McDonnell Douglas DC-9-50 and McDonnell Douglas MD-80 jetliners.^[30] Muse Air's successor, TranStar Airlines, continued to operate Douglas DC-9-50 jet service to Houston Hobby Airport in 1986 and 1987 with some flights offering direct, one stop service to Dallas Love Field and New Orleans.^[31]

In the fall of 1994, Continental Airlines and its regional affiliate Continental Express were operating a combined total of five nonstop flights a day to Houston Intercontinental Airport (IAH) with four flights operated by Continental with Boeing 727-200, Boeing 737-500 or McDonnell Douglas MD-80 jetliners and one flight operated by Continental Express with an ATR-42 turboprop.^[32] Continental was also operating international service at this time from Brownsville with a daily nonstop McDonnell Douglas MD-80 flight to Mexico City.^[32] Continental's service at this same time included two round trip Boeing 727-200 flights a day operated on a routing of Detroit-Houston-Brownsville and return.^[33] By the spring of 1995, Continental Airlines and Continental Express were continuing to serve Brownsville with a combined total of five nonstop flights a day to Houston Intercontinental Airport.^[34] Continental was operating Boeing 737-300 and Boeing 737-500 jets into the airport at this time while Continental Express was operating ATR-42 and ATR-72 turboprops.^[34]

Cargo

The airport is the largest air cargo handling airport in the Rio Grande Valley.

Pan American Airways (not to be confused with the original Pan Am) and World-Wide Consolidated Logistics, Inc. were to open cargo service to Latin America in 2011. A TSA Certified Cargo Screening Facility was established by World-Wide Consolidated Logistics, Inc. to facility the screening of domestic and international cargo to and from the United States with the intent of Brownsville South Padre Island

International Airport being the "Gateway to Latin America" in 2011 and the "Gateway to Africa" (via the Southern Route) in 2012. Those plans never came to fruition because the entity's (PAAWWCL) owner ran into legal trouble, preventing the airline from initiating any new services.

Website

The Brownsville/South Padre Island International Airport is the first airport in Texas to offer flight status notification via text-messaging through its website.

In addition to flight status text-messaging notification, the site also features current fares to popular routes, including Houston, Atlanta, Toronto, Minneapolis/St. Paul, and Querétaro.

See also

- Texas World War II Army Airfields

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External links

- Brownsville/South Padre Island International Airport (<http://www.flybrownsville.com/>), official website
- Rio Grande Valley Wing of the Commemorative Air Force (<http://www.rgvwingcaf.com/>)
- FAA Airport Diagram (<http://aeronav.faa.gov/d-tpp/1508/00061AD.PDF>) (PDF), effective July 23, 2015
- FAA Terminal Procedures for BRO (https://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/flight_info/aeronav/digital_products/dtpp/search/results/?cycle=1508&ident=BRO), effective July 23, 2015
- Resources for this airport:
 - AirNav airport information for KBRO (<http://www.airnav.com/airport/KBRO>)
 - ASN accident history for BRO (<http://aviation-safety.net/database/airport/airport.php?id=BRO>)
 - FlightAware airport information (<http://flightaware.com/resources/airport/KBRO>) and live flight tracker (<http://flightaware.com/live/airport/KBRO>)
 - NOAA/NWS latest weather observations (<http://www.crh.noaa.gov/data/obhistory/KBRO.html>)
 - SkyVector aeronautical chart for KBRO (<http://skyvector.com/perl/code?id=KBRO&scale=2>)
 - FAA current BRO delay information (<http://www.fly.faa.gov/flyfaa/flyfaaindex.jsp?ARPT=BRO&p=0>)

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