



Austin-Bergstrom
International Airport

factsfigures

Project: Onsite Consolidated Rental Car Facility

Location: Austin-Bergstrom (TX) Int'l Airport

Cost: \$155.5 million

Funding: \$5.95/day Customer Facility Charge

Facility Size: 1.3 million sq. ft.; 5 stories

Rental Companies Housed: 11

Public Parking: 758 spaces

Rental Vehicle Ready/Return: 1,771 spaces

Quick-Turn Facilities: 48 fueling positions; 12 carwash bays; 270 stacking spaces

Project Timeline: Spring 2013 – Oct. 2015

Owner: Airport

Master Lessee: Austin CONRAC

Ground Lease Term: 30 yrs.

Developer & Operator: Pfeffer Development/
Conrac Solutions

Design/Builder: Austin Commercial

Architect: Demattei Wong Architecture

Electrical: Schmidt Electric

**Mechanical, Plumbing, Vacuum System &
Windshield Washer Distribution:** Young & Pratt

Fueling Systems: Unified Services of Texas

Carwash Systems: Belanger; Rider Wash Systems

Facility Framework: United Forming

Reinforced Steel Installation: Central Texas
Reinforcement

Reinforced Steel Materials: CMC

Post Tensioning Cables: Suncoast

Enabling Work, Site Work & Utilities: Chasco
Constructors

Parking Control: Associated Time & Parking

Elevators & Escalators: Schindler Elevators

Irrigation & Landscaping: Avey's Lawn Care

Wall Panels: Fish Construction

Key Benefits: Improved customer service; new
logistic efficiencies for rental companies; decreased
vehicle emissions

Noteworthy Detail: Airport outsources operation
of facility



Austin-Bergstrom Enhances Service &

In October, Austin-Bergstrom International Airport (AUS) opened a \$155.5 million consolidated rental agency complex (conrac) funded with customer facility charges. Beyond creating a new onsite facility for rental agencies, officials also carved out more space for customer parking at the Texas airport.

The new 1.3 million-square-foot conrac includes roughly 760 public parking spaces on the ground level, topped by four floors of rental car operations. Three levels house ready/return areas and quick turn-around facilities; the top level provides 1,288 storage and staging spaces. An integrated customer service building on the first level of rental operations houses counter operations for 11 rental agencies in a facility the size of a football field.

While AUS owns the facility and garners good will for the added convenience it provides, airport personnel suffer almost no headaches associated with the new complex. Pfeffer Development/Conrac Solutions Project

Delivery managed the financing, development and construction of the structure. Conrac Solutions oversees day-to-day operations.

Shane Harbinson, assistant director of the airport, notes that the recently completed project began in 2008, when AUS updated its master plan. Back then, ready/return areas were located on the third level of a parking garage near the terminal, but facilities for individual agencies were located farther away. Vehicles had to make a 2.5-mile loop for refueling and cleaning before they were returned to service. "We looked at remote sites for a facility, but the rental car companies preferred an on-airport site to avoid bussing and shuttle operations," Harbinson recalls. Ultimately, a 15-acre site just north of the terminal was selected.



Shane Harbinson

After investigating conracs at other U.S. airports, officials determined the best approach was to have the rental agencies



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Avoids Operational Headaches with New Conrac By Robert Nordstrom

intimately involved with developing the project. AUS asked the rental car companies to devise a concept that would protect the airport's interests, including parking revenue, customer service and roadway efficiency.

"We looked at the proposal in somewhat the same way as having a fixed-base operator or cargo facilities at the airport — that is, a private developer would design and deliver the facility and be responsible for operations," Harbinson explains.

Austin CONRAC, the facility's master lessee, was formed at the request of the rental agencies and airport to represent rental car interests. It subsequently contracted with Pfeffer Development and its affiliate, Conrac Solutions Project Delivery, to develop and build the facility.

Personnel from Austin Commercial, the design/builder, highlight the cooperative nature among various participants on the project. "We all owned this project," reflects Jack Archer, the company's Central Texas division manager. "The airport wanted the facility to help modernize the airport and to get their parking spaces back. Pfeffer and the rental car companies wanted a facility that worked for them and the airport. They got what they wanted, and we got a cooperative team effort



Jack Archer

on the project. And that's what you always want—a team that plays well in the sandbox."

With construction complete, the rental agencies that occupy the facility anticipate new operational efficiencies inherent to the conrac's location and design. Anna Bootenhoff, manager of corporate communications for Hertz, notes that eliminating the need to shuffle cars between the terminal and remote lots is helping the company provide better, faster service at AUS. The facility also reduces roadway congestion and vehicle emissions, she adds.

Better than Aspirin

Mark Pfeffer, president and chief executive officer of Pfeffer Development/Conrac Solutions, credits AUS officials for recognizing the complexities of building and operating a consolidated rental car center. While many airport executives consider such facilities parking garages for rental cars, he contends they are actually more like airport terminals, because both facilities manage waves of arriving and departing travelers. Just as ground crews clean and refuel planes to prepare them for another load of airline passengers, conrac workers clean and refuel vehicles for the next drivers. Both businesses focus on quick turns, and they even serve the same customers.



Mark Pfeffer

Dividing a conrac's operating expenses among various tenants can prove prickly, Pfeffer adds. In many cases, airports pass on costs to rental car companies collectively, in equal portions. This works well when agencies hold largely similar market shares, he notes. When one company is struggling, however, some airports expect the other agencies to cover more of the expenses — even though the less successful company has full use of the facility and the opportunity to compete for more business.

"As you might imagine, the rental car companies tend to get extremely animated when this happens," comments Pfeffer.

Hiring an outside operator for the conrac can solve such conflicts and help alleviate other potential issues for the airport, emphasize Pfeffer and AUS officials. "The public-private partnership worked very well here," reflects AUS Project Manager Janice White. "The rental companies formed a group with a single point of contact and contracted with the developer. While we had many issues to resolve, especially getting everybody to agree on the contracts, having a single point of contact was very beneficial."

More Arrivals, More Rentals

AUS has experienced high growth for the last few years; and 2015 seems to be continuing the trend. In July alone, traffic was up 12% compared to July 2014 levels. "The airlines are finding our market is strong and are putting in more service," Harbinson reports. "Austin is turning into a destination for a lot of folks."

Based on the premise that high passenger volume translates into high demand for rental cars, the airport proceeded with plans for an onsite conrac. It signed a 30-year ground lease contract with Austin CONRAC; and Pfeffer Development/Conrac Solutions developed a financing package to pay for design and construction of the new complex with proceeds from a \$5.95 per day customer facility charge.

The new structure was built over part of an existing 800-space uncovered parking lot, which was temporarily taken offline during construction. When the new facility was complete, the airport designated 758 spaces on the ground floor for public parking. It gained another 1,200 stalls for customer vehicles by repurposing space in the garage that previously housed rental operations.

AUS's new five-story complex may look like a parking garage, but it serves many more functions, notes Wesley Wong, chairman and principal

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Moving quick-turn/fueling stations closer to the terminal will decrease vehicle emissions and roadway congestion.



Wesley Wong

of Demattel Wong Architects. He breaks the rental car portion of the building into two primary components: one area for companies to showcase their product and another for back-of-house operations to process it.

Ready/return areas can accommodate more than 1,770 vehicles. "Rental car companies typically store their fleet offsite," Wong explains. "When we design these facilities, as a general rule of thumb, we try to program a facility that will hold approximately 30% of the total rental car fleet. You don't want to provide space for the entire fleet, because if the company can park all their cars that means they aren't being rented and the company isn't making money."

Quick-turn facilities at AUS' new conrac are outfitted with 48 fueling stations, 12 carwash bays and 270 stacking spaces.

Meeting Code

Dividing the facility's 48 fueling positions equally among three levels allows individual rental companies to process vehicles on a single level; but installing so many stations in the vertical facility presented significant challenges. Prescriptive fire codes typically do not allow more than three indoor fueling positions, informs Wong. To obtain approval for additional indoor, above-grade fueling stations, the firm used an alternate means and methods request.

"Our responsibility is to show authorities how we intend to meet the intent of the code," explains Wong. "Even though the fire codes are very similar throughout the country, the interpretation of the code can be different depending on the jurisdiction."

Design/building Austin Commercial was also involved in the effort. "One of the challenges is there is no precedent or codes written for (vertical fueling facilities)," remarks Steven Jones, the company's project manager for the AUS project. "We had to work with what the city of Austin refers to as performance-based design, a white paper that outlines the potential hazards of multi-level fueling within a facility." The firm met repeatedly with the Austin Fire Department and developmental services personnel to demonstrate that its design addressed all potential hazards and provided for proper fire containment, recalls Jones.



Steven Jones

The design that was ultimately approved and executed keeps the system's three 20,000-gallon fuel tanks below grade and outside

the facility. Fuel from the tanks enters the conrac via a single room at ground level, and is then pumped up to individual fueling stations on three levels above. Direct protection measures include a full sprinkler system throughout the facility, flame detection in fueling areas and an exhaust system that is activated when fuel is pumped. The design also limits the fueling rate of individual pumps and the total number of gallons that can be pumped once a pump is activated.

During inspection, fire marshals used performance-based design criteria to determine whether the fueling system met applicable codes.

CONGRATULATIONS

ON THE NEW CONSOLIDATED RENTAL CAR FACILITY

- Convenient access to rental car companies
- Spacious customer service lobby
- 412 tons of reduced carbon dioxide emissions per year

ConracSolutions.com



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Artwork added to transitional space between the terminal and new facility also extends onto the plaza of the concourse.

Because the fueling stations also serve as general service areas, each one includes a compressed air station for filling tires, a system to top off windshield washing liquid and other fluids, and a

vacuum system for cleaning interiors. After workers fuel and service vehicles, they drive them through one of four car wash bays that are spread throughout three levels of the facility.

Green, With Gallery Art

Aesthetically, the new rental car complex complements the airport's existing Texas hill country architecture, Wong informs. Designers specified indigenous natural materials such as limestone and pearl granite, as well as lighter colored woods, to give the structure a warm feel. As a contrast, glass and stainless steel wall panels reference Austin's high-tech industries.

Airport officials hope that the facility's green features will lead to silver certification from the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program. Lighting is monitored and controlled automatically; and water from the car wash bays is reclaimed and recycled. The building core's elevators and escalators are open air, which decreases building heat during the summer. The public parking area includes two charging stations for electric vehicles.

On the rental operations side, designers estimate that eliminating the distance between vehicle prep areas and ready/return lots will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 411.7 tons per year.

In addition to its environmental features, the complex also includes an art installation titled *Uplifted Ground*. Hundreds of geometric concrete sculptures, some suspended by steel cable, embellish the rental car plaza and the space that connects the facility to AUS' terminal. Relief patterns that highlight the sculptures are adorned with metals, local granite and LED fixtures to reflect light and project a subtle glow. The artist derived the abstract patterns from aerial views of central Texas — an apt source of visual imagery for the growing Texas airport.

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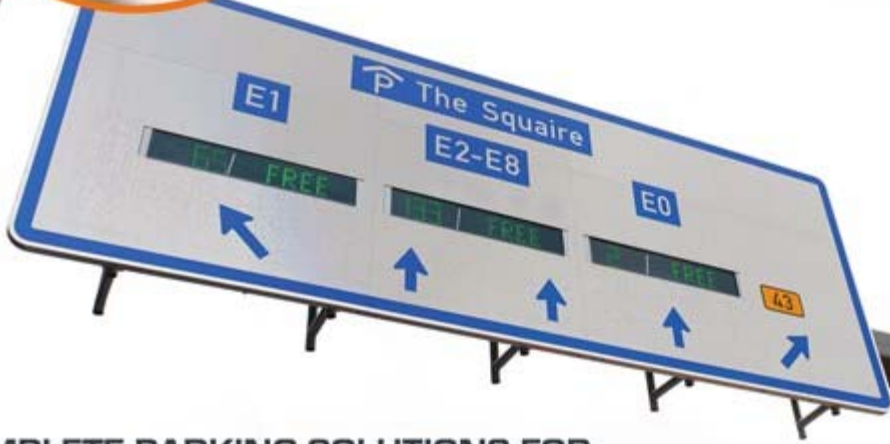
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