

**Norfolk Airport Authority's Executive Director Robert S. Bowen, A.A.E.  
Announces His Retirement**

Robert S. Bowen, the Norfolk Airport Authority's Executive Director for the last five years, will be retiring from his position effective March 1, 2022. The Norfolk Airport Authority is a political sub-division of the Commonwealth of Virginia, an autonomous agency of the City of Norfolk, and the owner, landlord and operator of the Norfolk International Airport. Malcolm P. Branch, Chairman of the Norfolk Airport Authority Board of Commissioners, made the announcement on June 24, 2021 at the Board's regularly scheduled meeting.

Bowen's retirement next March will mark the completion of a forty-five-year career at the Norfolk International Airport which began with a summer job in 1974 fueling aircraft at the Piedmont Aviation fixed base operation. After graduating from Old Dominion University in 1975 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Management, he returned to Piedmont Aviation in 1977 as an aircraft line serviceman. This led to a succession of promotions up to Assistant Manager until he received a job offer from the Norfolk Airport Authority in late 1987, an opportunity which he accepted.

Bowen served the Airport Authority as Director of Operations from 1988 to 2009, Deputy Executive Director from 2009-2016, and as Executive Director since March 1, 2016. Bowen is the Airport Authority's third Executive Director, following Wayne E. Shank (2009-2016) and Kenneth R. Scott (1972-2009). Bowen is a member of the American Association of Airport Executives and the Airports Council International-North America; and has been an Accredited Airport Executive since 1995. He is an Executive Member of the Virginia Airport Operators Council, which represents the Commonwealth's sixty-six public-use commercial and general aviation airports, and has served as a Board member, Secretary, Vice President and President.

Bowen's tenure as Executive Director has been a continuation of the vigorous infrastructure capital improvement programs carried out by Ken Scott and Wayne Shank to constantly modernize and improve the Airport. Since 2016 the Airport Authority has initiated 120 capital improvement projects at a combined cost of \$170 million. These planning, design, construction and procurement projects include a nine-level 3,200 space parking garage, 22 new replacement passenger loading bridges, a U.S. Customs and Immigration facility for corporate and general aviation aircraft, the relocation of Rental Car Return from a remote surface lot to the second level of Garage A connected to the Arrivals and Departures Terminals, the rehabilitation of the asphalt and concrete pavement of the primary runway and associated taxiways, the modernization of the ticketing lobbies, a Master Plan Update, a Strategic Plan which addresses Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; a \$54 million Airport Revenue Bond issuance for the parking garage in 2019, a \$30 million Subordinate Revolving Line of Credit in 2020, and a \$26 million Airport Revenue Refunding Bonds issuance for the Series 2011 Bonds in 2021.

Air Service Development has continued to be an important focus for the Airport Authority during Bowen's tenure. Due to earlier airline mergers the Airport had vacant facilities such as concourse gates and hold rooms, ticket counters and baggage service offices. Beginning in 2016 these facilities were equipped with common-use hardware and software which allows for multiple airlines to use the same spaces at pre-set costs. These common-use facilities helped attract ultra-low-cost carriers Allegiant in 2017, Frontier in 2018 and Breeze in 2021. In 2018 the Airport gained its first non-stop service to the West Coast (San Diego). In 2019 the Airport experienced its highest passenger activity at just under 4 million departing and arriving passengers.

During Bowen's tenure the Arts at the Airport were promoted, including a partnership with the Chrysler Museum's Glass Art Studio to provide exhibit space in the Departures Terminal for the Studio's staff to display their personal creations, a permanent display by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in the Arrivals Terminal which recognizes its relationship with the City of Norfolk, photography by a local artist in both Terminals, and a collaboration between the Airport Authority and the City of Norfolk for the installation of a major artwork on Airport Authority property at the entrance to the Airport.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has been the Norfolk Airport Authority's greatest challenge but will result in the Airport Authority's greatest success. Thanks to the hard work and perseverance of the Airport Authority's dedicated staff, the Airport has remained operational, clean, sanitized and resilient even as passenger activity in 2020 fell 55 percent compared to 2019. Since March 2021 passenger activity has rebounded due to the pent-up demand for leisure travel. The Airport Authority staff suffered very few positive cases of COVID-19 and most of those were fortunately not serious. Over 60 percent of the staff have been fully vaccinated.

The Airport Authority received \$42.8 million in federal COVID-19 relief funds, which will be used exclusively for Airport Authority debt service and staff wages, salaries and benefits. In 2021 the Airport Authority was awarded \$33 million over a five-year period from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act for various capital improvement projects.

**Chairman Branch added, "Robert Bowen has devoted over four decades of dedicated service and leadership to Norfolk International Airport. He leaves a legacy of excellence that will be visible for years to come at every corner of the Airport and within the organization he has led. His steady hand, particularly through the pandemic, leaves the Airport poised to quickly return to pre-COVID service."**

The Norfolk Airport Authority Board of Commissioners is conducting a national selection process for the next Executive Director.