



February 19, 2016

Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport to Mark Black History Month

Exhibit honoring Freedom Riders to be introduced

ATLANTA – A civil rights volunteer and original Freedom Rider will join officials at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL) to mark Black History Month on Monday, Feb. 22. As part of the celebration, ATL will host Courage Under Fire, one of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute's (BCRI) six traveling exhibitions on loan around the country. The exhibition is made up of a series of photographs depicting the 1961 firebombing of a bus filled with Freedom Riders on an Alabama highway. The 64 photographs in the collection were taken by Anniston Star photographer Joseph Postiglione. Hours after the firebombing, Mr. Postiglione's photos appeared in newspapers across the country, providing Americans a dramatic example of violent resistance to desegregation in Alabama.

Hank Thomas, an Atlanta businessman and entrepreneur, is underwriting the cost of the exhibit and will participate in Monday's event. Mr. Thomas was one of the original Freedom Riders, and he traveled on Greyhound and Trailways buses through the South in 1961 to protest racial segregation. "I am very humbled and pleased that these images are on loan at the Airport," Mr. Thomas said. "The younger generation especially needs to view these images. They need to see that ordinary people like themselves risked their lives to challenge injustice, yet never gave up hope."

"Our Art Program is designed to enhance the passenger experience," Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport General Manager Miguel Southwell said today. "This display accomplishes that by informing our passengers about the challenges faced in the battle for civil rights."

"BCRI is honored to have the opportunity to display these powerful and inspirational images at the world's largest and busiest airport," said Ahmad Ward, BCRI vice president of Education and Exhibitions. "Billions around the world will have an opportunity to see these iconic images and reflect about the roles of violence and law enforcement in the civil rights movement."

WHO:

Michael Smith, ATL senior deputy general manager

Cesar Mitchell, president, Atlanta City Council

Hank Thomas, entrepreneur and Freedom Rider

WHAT:

Black History Month celebration; Courage Under Fire, exhibition of photographs documenting Freedom Riders' efforts

WHEN:

Noon. Monday, Feb. 22 (Media must arrive by 11:45 a.m.)

WHERE:

Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport

Domestic Terminal Atrium, Adjacent to the clock tower, 6000 North Terminal Parkway Atlanta, GA 30320

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Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport

Hartsfield-Jackson (ATL) is the world's busiest and most efficient airport, serving more than 101 million passengers annually with nonstop service to more than 150 U.S. destinations and nearly 70 international destinations in more than 45 countries. ATL boasts a direct economic impact of \$34.8 billion in metro Atlanta and a total direct economic impact of \$70.9 billion in Georgia. The Airport is the largest employer in Georgia, with more than 63,000 employees. The Airport is a frequent recipient of awards of excellence for concessions, operations, architectural engineering and construction – including the 2013 Global Efficiency Excellence Award from the Air Transport Research Society, 2013 Project of the Year, Architectural Category for the Maynard H. Jackson Jr. International Terminal from the American Association of Airport Executives Southeast chapter and the 2012 Best Airport in North America, Business Travel Award from the Business Traveler Magazine. ATL has completed more than \$6 billion worth of capital improvements, including a new, energy-efficient rental car center, a gold LEED-certified international terminal and aesthetic and functional upgrades to its concourses, people movers and parking services. For more information, go to www.atlanta-airport.com. Check out the Airport's YouTube channel by visiting www.youtube.com/AtlantaHartsfield, follow us on Twitter (@Atlanta_Airport) and become a fan on Facebook (Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport).

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