



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**MAYOR BRANDON JOHNSON CELEBRATES COMPLETION OF NORTHEAST CARGO
CAMPUS AT O'HARE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**

The expanded cargo capacity has helped make O'Hare the top U.S. cargo airport by trade value and set all-time freight tonnage records for the airport four years in a row

CHICAGO – Mayor Brandon Johnson joined the Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA) and its construction and cargo partners at O'Hare International Airport today to celebrate the completion of the airport's Northeast Cargo campus, which has vastly improved the airport's cargo capacity and bolstered its position as a global shipping hub.

"O'Hare is our region's largest economic engine, and cargo operations are a critical component of that engine," said **Mayor Brandon Johnson**. "These new cargo facilities support Chicago's role in bringing essential goods from across the globe into the United States and shipping them to all corners of the nation, all while creating job opportunities for local communities.

"And behind the leadership of Bowa Construction, one of our region's most prominent Black-led contracting firms, we continue to make history and deliver on the promise of a better, stronger, safer Chicago for businesses and the people they serve."

"Cargo operations have been soaring at O'Hare in recent years, and this essential expansion of our infrastructure helps us keep up with the growing demand," said **CDA Commissioner Jamie L. Rhee**. "We are happy to have Realterm as a long-term cargo partner, and I'm proud to say that Northeast Cargo Phase III is the first major airport cargo facility in the nation to be built by an African American-led construction team under the direction of

prime contractor Bowa Construction, in keeping with Mayor Johnson's vision for a City that creates opportunities for Chicagoans of all backgrounds."

[B-roll of today's event, courtesy of the Chicago Department of Aviation]

The third and final phase of the Northeast Cargo campus, developed by Realterm, opened for cargo operations last year, with some final punch list items completed this year. The project added an additional 130,000 square feet and two aircraft parking positions to the existing cargo area. The Phase III ramp can accommodate up to a dozen jumbo freighters per day and process more than 100,000 metric tonnes of cargo per year. The building's roof also features an array of more than 2,500 solar panels that can generate an estimated 1.25 million kilowatt-hours of electricity annually.

Phase III of the Realterm Northeast Cargo campus project achieved a participation rate of 55% for minority- and women-owned businesses, with more than \$23 million of the project's \$43 million cost spent with diverse firms. The project created 340 full-time construction jobs and another 180 full-time permanent jobs at the completed facility.

"Air cargo is a significant economic engine for O'Hare and our great city," said **Tim Scholten, senior vice president of BOWA Construction**. "To experience the Northeast Air Cargo facility in full operational mode is such a proud moment for the BOWA team and all our construction partners. Many thanks to Commissioner Rhee and CDA for all their support."

"The grand opening of this landmark air cargo project at O'Hare International Airport celebrates the culmination of years of hard work and collaboration with our valued project stakeholders," said **David Rose, Managing Director of Realterm**. "This cutting-edge cargo facility cements ORD's position as a leading global shipping hub while stimulating job creation and economic growth in the region. We are proud to be part of the team inaugurating new avenues for international trade connectivity and inclusive contracting that will benefit the local economy for years to come."

The first two phases opened in 2016 and 2017, respectively, and the completed cargo campus encompasses about 900,000 square feet of facility space with parking for 13 jumbo freighters, supporting approximately 2,200 cargo jobs on site.

Worldwide Flight Services (WFS) serves as cargo handling operator for the Phase III facilities, with AGI, DHL and Swissport operating in Phases I and II.

"Worldwide Flight Services, a part of SATS group, is proud to be part of O'Hare's remarkable growth as a leading global cargo hub," said **Michael Simpson, CEO for WFS in North America**. "The expansion of the Northeast Cargo campus not only enhances our ability to efficiently manage the increasing volumes of freight but also underscores the critical role O'Hare plays in connecting Chicago to the world."

O'Hare processed more than 1.9 million tonnes of freight in 2023, continuing a streak of handling all-time record tonnage since the pandemic — an accomplishment made possible with the capacity added by the Northeast Cargo campus. The airport serves more than 30 cargo airlines, in addition to the freight carried in the bellies of passenger jets.

O'Hare is the top cargo airport in the United States by trade value and processes approximately \$300 billion in trade annually. Approximately 5,000 jobs at O'Hare are related to cargo operations, in addition to thousands more jobs throughout the region that are supported by the airport's role as a global cargo hub.

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