

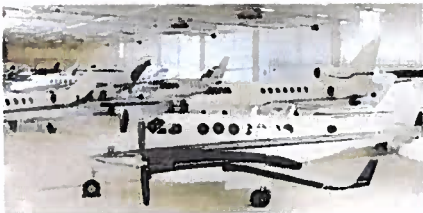
MINNESOTA FACILITY PROVES AN ALTERNATIVE TO BUSY MSP

Sometimes simple is better. That's the philosophy Connecticut-based aviation services provider Key Air heeded when it designed its FBO at Minnesota's Anoka County-Blaine Airport (ANE), near Minneapolis. In deference to local aesthetics the company avoided the use of shiny chrome and marble, relying instead on wood, stone and brick. The 12,000-sq-ft terminal, which opened in 2008 as part of the newly built \$20+-million facility, features a spacious interior with a soaring ceiling. "When guests come in either from the street side or the ramp, the first thing they see is the floor-to-ceiling brickwork and floor-to-ceiling windows extending up about 30 feet," said Bob Marinace, Key Air's president and CEO. The lobby features a large fireplace that it shares with a separate customer lounge whose full-height windows look out onto the ramp, allowing waiting passengers to view their aircraft.

The facility offers 8,000 sq ft of office space in the form of eight tenant suites that provide flight departments with private offices and shop areas, each with separate access to the parking lot and the hangar. The 64,000-sq-ft heated hangar—which can accommodate a Gulfstream V or a Bombardier Global—is currently filled to capacity.

Anoka County-Blaine is a general aviation airport with a 5,000-foot-long main runway that sees an average of approximately 250 operations a day. Key Air and its lone competitor on the field pump a combined 1.5 million gallons of fuel a year, two-thirds of it jet-A. The airport is well situated as a tech stop for aircraft headed from the Northeast to Northern California and Pacific Northwest destinations. It also handles a sizable volume of traffic from Canada.

In evidence of the recent rise in general aviation activity, Marinace said the location's business has increased four-fold over the past year. To serve its based and transient clients, Key Air has a 3,000-gallon jet-A tanker and a 750-gallon avgas truck to dispense its Avfuel-distributed fuels. The FBO also has a self-service avgas pump.



Key Air offers light line maintenance.

Among the more than 400 aircraft based at ANE are approximately 25 jets, ranging from Citations up to a 600-series Bombardier Challenger, and approximately 20 turboprops, and the airport sees approximately 42 percent of its traffic from transient aircraft. Key Air's site provides more than 400,000 sq ft of unobstructed ramp space, with seven concrete pads that can accommodate aircraft

weighing more than 100,000 pounds.

The location of the airport on the outskirts of the Minneapolis metro area was one of the key features that attracted Key Air's attention, according to Marinace. "It kind of follows the model that we have with our headquarters location [at Waterbury-Oxford Airport in Connecticut] because



Key Air's Anoka County-Blaine Airport FBO is designed to appeal to a rustic aesthetic.

Oxford is on the periphery of the metro area, which you would consider White Plains or Teterboro, and we kind of like that vantage point because what it does is it puts us outside all of that congestion."

A Less Crowded Alternative

Avoiding that congestion is one of the keys to accessing the city, and the company calculates that a private aviation passenger could save 45 minutes by using ANE, which is less than 20 miles north of Minneapolis, rather than going through MSP. "If you are going into MSP, you can expect vectoring, and with Anoka there is no vectoring," said Marinace. "You can expect a longer taxi time because of the commercial traffic [at MSP]; with us it's a two-minute taxi, and the drive time when you factor in the traffic in the Minneapolis area coming from MSP is actually less."

The facility sees a lot of seasonal traffic. With its many lakes and surrounding scenery, the local area is a vacation destination that sees an increase in traffic in the late spring and summer as passengers travel to summer homes. In the winter, Key Air's charter and management division sees a lot of charter flights headed to Florida.

Minnesota winters are legendary for their severity, and naturally in such a climate, the 24/7 FBO offers de-icing, as well as light line-level maintenance such as component removal and replacement or pre- and post-flight general servicing. The company can arrange more involved repairs through outside approved vendors. Key Air also offers aircraft cleaning services.

In terms of crew amenities, the facility features a flight-planning room with weather tracking computers (WSI service), a crew lounge, a snooze room and showers. A well equipped sport utility vehicle is available for crew use.

The FBO, which allows ramp access for airplane-side passenger drop-off and pickup, also offers a spacious conference room with audiovisual capability. It has private day offices with phones, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the building, which is furnished with several 60-inch plasma TVs with DirecTV. There is Hertz car rental available on site. —C.E.