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FOSTERING A SPIRIT
OF COLLABORATION

A Natural Fit

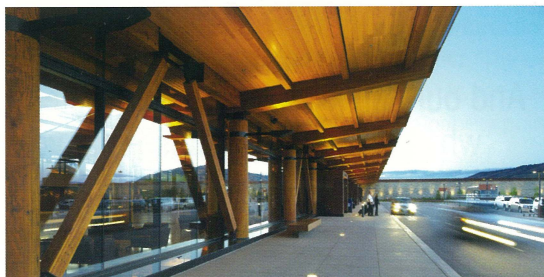
Jackson Hole Airport Terminal Combines Mountain Architecture
and Environmental Awareness

by Michael Adkins



Photography courtesy of Gensler

Many architectural designs are all about standing out and making a bold statement against the backdrop of their settings. But, for the team charged with expanding and renovating Jackson Hole Airport, the concept of fitting in — of truly being a part of the landscape, instead of being apart — was key.



Jackson Hole Airport is located outside the city limits of Jackson, Wyo., on the grounds of Grand Teton National Park. It is the only airport in a national park in the United States.

Although it serves a very small town — the population of Jackson was just 9,577 at the time of the 2010 U.S. census — Jackson Hole Airport is the largest airport in Wyoming and has about 300,000 enplanements per year. This reflects its status as a tourist hub

Jackson Hole Airport

Architect: Gensler

Associate Architect: Carney Logan Burke Architects

Project Management: Kadrmas, Lee & Jackson

Baggage-System Consultant: BNP Associates, Inc.

Mechanical, Engineering and Plumbing Systems:

Swanson Rink

Structural Engineer: Martin/Martin, Inc.

Civil Work: Jacobs

Location: Grand Teton National Park, Jackson, Wyo.

Budget: \$30.6 million

Scope: 92,000 square feet

Sustainability: LEED Silver-certified



for the town of Jackson, Grand Teton National Park and nearby Yellowstone National Park, according to Brent Mather, AIA, design director of Denver-based architectural firm Gensler, who oversaw the airport's renovation. "Throughout the United States, airport enplanements have been decreasing as airports have dropped the number of flights, but Jackson Hole Airport's have gone up because of the strong tourism in the area," Mather explained.

Construction work for the terminal began in June 2009 and was completed in December 2010. The renovation nearly doubled the size of the previous terminal without any additional impact on the site. This was accomplished by reusing 80 percent of the existing terminal's structure and reclaiming a portion of the airport's parking lot. The expansion includes a new ticket hall, a rental-car area and a baggage-screening building.

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Because the pristine natural setting is a major reason for this tourism, the major concepts behind the design of Jackson Hole Airport's new terminal were establishing a dialogue between the interior and exterior and acknowledging the rich Western heritage





of the area. “We were very sensitive to the environment,” Mather said. “We wanted the building to be an understated element in the presence of these very, very powerful mountains. We weren’t trying to do a statement building — it was always about how it fit in and collaborated with its environment.” As part of this collaboration with the environment, the Jackson Hole Airport design placed a high emphasis on sustainability, earning a LEED Silver certification from the U.S. Green Building Council in the process.

The use of exposed structural elements and a wood framework throughout Jackson Hole Airport provides a strong link to the facility’s natural setting in the American West. This was made possible by the area’s high-quality materials, Mather said. “That afforded us the ability to create something specific to Jackson Hole, as opposed to most airports throughout the country, which are steel and glass and are less specific to their communities,” he pointed out. “Stylistically, the client wanted something grounded in the spirit of the Jackson area but representative of the future, which is what we delivered.”

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The new Jackson Hole Airport is better equipped to meet the demands of the future while still serving as an accurate reflection of the community it serves — an achievement that was made possible through the shared vision of everyone involved, Mather said. “Getting everyone on board and working toward a common goal made it possible for us to create an aesthetically pleasing final product that also works well,” he stated. “This project became much more than the sum of its parts, and it’s because it had the support of its community and a team of people who worked really well together to make it happen.” ●

