



**‘Local control’ proves to be an important milestone for Ontario International Airport and San Bernardino County, California.**

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**“T**here it is. Take it.”  
With those words from Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, the Ontario International Airport (ONT) was now under local control for the first time in half a century.

The November 1, 2016, transfer of authority from Los Angeles World Airports and the City of Los Angeles to the Ontario International Airport Authority opens up greater opportunity for aviation business, passenger traffic and air cargo for the City of Ontario and San Bernardino County, the largest county in land mass in the United States.

Garcetti presented a ceremonial key to the airport to Ontario City Councilman Alan Wapner, signaling the change in authority, but he also pledged to support the 21-month transition. “This is your airport. We intend

to all use it together in a common future, in a common destiny,” the LA mayor said.

Kelly Fredericks, CEO of the Ontario International Airport Authority, says the impact of the shift to local control will be dramatic. “We are a medium-hub airport with enormous growth potential for cargo and passengers,” he says. “We’re surrounded by interstates 10 and 15 and US Highway 60. This has been an underserved and under-utilized asset. Our focus is to optimize the economic benefit of this airport. We are now truly the only unconstrained airport in all of Southern California, and we have the opportunity to grow right now.”

It didn’t take long for the impact to be felt. On December 19, Southwest Airlines announced non-stop service from ONT to Love Field in Dallas. The new flights begin service January 15.

Located 35 miles east of downtown Los

In 2015, a total of 509,809 tons of air freight were shipped from ONT, including freight delivered by FedEx. ONT is the 15th largest cargo airport in the US.

Photo courtesy of Ontario International Airport

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Angeles, ONT sits in the center of a Southern California region of 23 million people. In 2015, some 4.2 million passengers used the airport, and 509,809 tons of air freight were shipped.

ONT’s more than 64 daily flights provide service to major cities in the Western US. Airlines operating at ONT include AeroMexico, Alaska, American, Delta, Southwest, United/United Express and Volaris.

## The Economy is Job One

Stimulating economic development will be job one for ONT, says Fredericks. “We’re going to aggressively pursue property development opportunities,” he notes. “We have a 1,700-acre footprint with 700 developable acres.”

Air cargo operations will expand significantly, he adds. “We have a strong presence of air cargo led by UPS. We are the 15th largest cargo airport in the country. Amazon is growing. FedEx is growing. UPS is growing. And we have enormous available space. We are only at 40 to 45 percent of our terminal capacity with passengers. We have the infrastructure in place to accommodate growth.”

Fredericks says his team views ONT “as a regional asset and more than an airport. Air cargo is up 11 percent this year.”

Fredericks adds that “we are truly one of the primary economic engines for the Inland Empire. We move people and we move goods. Keeping companies located in the region is paramount. Managing this asset will be our primary focus. That will translate into a dramatically enhanced business climate. We think we are in the right place at the right time.”

## Testing the Engines of the Future at Southern California Logistics Airport

In addition to ONT, the County and its businesses also benefit from two other large airports with spare capacity and available space. One of those airports is Southern California Logistics Airport, a 2,500-acre world-class aviation and air cargo facility serving international and domestic needs located in Victorville. Joe Gavigan is plant leader at Flight Test Operations of GE Aviation, based at the SCLA. GE Aviation is the largest manufacturer of jet engines in the world. The Victorville facility serves as the center for flight test operations for new engines. As such, GE Aviation is one of those rapidly growing companies that Fredericks knows is important to the region.

“The key to our success in flight testing these new engines is really the climate, in terms of the weather and the workforce and the ideal conditions that we have at the SCLA in order to produce the number of flights and duration of flights to validate these new engines,” says Gavigan. “We are ideally situated and we are able to meet all of the demand and deliver for the business. We are happy to be able to locate our business here and it’s worked out great for the last 13 years that we have been here.”

Over the past couple of years, the workforce at GE Aviation in Victorville has grown from 50 full-time employees to about 150. “Having the highly skilled workforce in San Bernardino County has helped us meet demand,” says Gavigan. “The work that goes on at the flight test center is crucial to the success of our business. It is a competitive advantage.”

Due to the success that GE Aviation has enjoyed in San Bernardino County, the Flight Test center will keep growing, Gavigan adds. “What’s in store for the future at the Flight Test center is a whole suite of new engines coming online,” he says. “GE has invested heavily in





Earlier this year, UPS announced the addition of a new sorting facility and the expansion of its existing building at Ontario International Airport. The new building will process urgent, time-definite UPS Next Day Air® packages and will feature automated sorting capabilities. The expanded ground sorting facility will be retrofitted with automated sorting systems and have

twice the package processing capacity. When complete, the existing UPS® ground sorting facility will process twice the amount of packages per hour. This expansion is driven by recent growth in e-commerce and traditional retail businesses.

Photo courtesy of Ontario International Airport

future technologies that we are bringing into these next-generation engines that we are flying, so for the next few years we are going to continue to mature those technologies and demonstrate the reliability of them in flight to deliver for our airline customers.”

One project “that I’m most excited about,” says Gavigan, “is the GE9X engine that we have coming for the next generation of the Boeing 777X airplane. Next year we’re going to have that engine at the Flight Test center and validate that game-changing design before it enters service. It’s going to take 3D-printed parts to a whole new level, as well as bring in an expanded view of the new ceramic matrix composite materials that we have in our pipeline.”

#### **Building the Workforce Pipeline**

Providing the trained workers who test those engines is partly the responsibility of Reg Javier, the newly named deputy executive officer of workforce and economic development for San Bernardino County, an area of 2 million residents including 900,000 workers.

The America’s Job Center of California is the primary delivery method for worker training services in the county, notes Javier. “We have three of these centers in the county. They’re geared to provide essential job-training services

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*Plant Leader, Flight Test operations of GE Aviation, Victorville*

to any job seeker who is seeking employment or training. We pay for the training for any job. We can send them directly to an institution to receive training in order to be employed in any sector in the county.”

Businesses looking to hire new employees can take advantage of a customized training platform designed by the Workforce Development Department of San Bernardino County.

“We can put people into a manufacturing class. All graduates would be hired by the company. We would pay a share of the training and employment costs,” says Javier.

“We have been a leader in manufacturing,

**“I think that most business leaders will find that when it comes to **overall business friendliness**, you cannot beat San Bernardino County. We will help and support you.”**

— Reg Javier, Deputy Executive Officer, Workforce and Economic Development, San Bernardino County

## ONTARIO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AT A GLANCE:

- Medium-hub, **full-service airport** in Ontario, California.
- Located **35 miles east of downtown Los Angeles** in San Bernardino County.
- Service Area: **6 million people** living in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties and portions of north Orange County and east Los Angeles County.
- **4.2 million passengers** served in 2015.



Passenger traffic is on the rise at Ontario International Airport, which on November 1, 2016, was awarded its independence from Los Angeles World Airports and granted local control.

Photo courtesy of Ontario International Airport

- **509,809 tons of cargo** shipped in 2015.
  - **More than 64 daily flights.**
- Airlines Operating at ONT: **AeroMexico, Alaska, American, Delta, Southwest, United/United Express, Volaris.**
- Freight Carriers: **Ameriflight, Empire Airlines, Federal Express, Kalitta Air, West Air, United Parcel Service.**

distribution and logistics. Fly over San Bernardino County and you will see our distribution, transportation and manufacturing footprint. It is ingrained into who we are.”

Another direct example of the County’s Workforce Development Department efforts is the Victor Valley College Aviation Program. This program is the result of a collaborative effort including the College, City, County, and Industry leaders. Under the Victor Valley Aviation Education Consortium (VVAEC) all stakeholders have come together to make this Aviation maintenance technology, training and employment opportunity available in the County’s High Desert region.

Javier says that the county had created an entire “workforce ecosystem” to support the hiring and training needs of local employers. “We’re beginning to hit our stride into how we work together,” he says. “We address quality of life. We are diversifying our portfolio in the region.”

Top priorities for the county in 2007, notes Javier, include “letting everybody know what is changing in San Bernardino County. We’ve been recognized for distribution and manufacturing, but people don’t know the other things about the county. We are a magnet region. We facilitate business creation throughout the region. Beyond the prototypical assets that are available, we have a county government and local municipalities that work together to pave the way for businesses to succeed. We think of it from a partnership and collaboration perspective. We want to know what you’re struggling with and what you need help with as a business. I think that most business leaders will find that when it comes to overall business friendliness, you cannot beat San Bernardino County.”

The bottom line, he says, “is that we will help and support you.” ▼

This Investment Profile was prepared under the auspices of San Bernardino County government. For more information, contact the county Economic Development Agency at 909-387-9801. On the Web, go to [www.sbcountyadvantage.com](http://www.sbcountyadvantage.com).