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King Air
March 2026 Volume 20 / Number 3
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Courtesy of Wheels Up

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MARKET REPORT

WHAT'S UP WITH THE KING AIR MARKET?

by Chip McClure

The King Air 350i market was hit hard by all the Wheels Up tails hitting the market.

PHOTO CREDIT: WHEELS UP

Each January I sit down to write the annual article on the King Air market and each year I wonder how different the market may look by the time it is published – and by the time you, the reader, are reading these words.

First, a look back at 2025

I'll start with a recap of 2025 because it was a particularly interesting year for the King Air market. It had its highs and lows, but overall, it was marked by less volatility than the prior few years.

Across the entire King Air market – all models – the average number of transactions per month declined slightly yet remained consistently between 30 and 40 aircraft. It is important to note that the total number of aircraft listed for sale rose above 300 during 2025, even as completed sales dipped modestly. This was not because of a lack of demand. Demand remains at all-time highs. Rather, it has simply become more difficult to find and purchase nice examples of popular King Air models.

The legacy 90-series King Airs – C90, C90-1 and E90 – generally followed the overall market trend. Fewer airframes transacted while the number of aircraft advertised for sale increased. Demand for these older aircraft has been less consistent than for later models, with pricing driving most transactions. The result has been a steady downward trend in sales prices.

I address the F90/F90-1 market separately because it is the most volatile King Air submarket. It is small with a loyal following and as a result a few transactions up or down can quickly make the market feel very hot or very soft. The F90 market was hot in 2024 but turned frigid in 2025 and has remained very slow over the last 12 months. I expect this market to rebound with 2026 looking to be a better year in availability of decent airframes and total number of sales.

The C90A/B, GT, GTi and GTx market has been steady with sales following the overall trend, though instead of a consistent rise in inventory numbers we

saw sales volume rise early in the year and then decline in the third and fourth quarters.

The total number of B200, 250 and 260 transactions declined slightly in 2025, but demand – especially in the later model airframes – continued to grow. Late-model 260 pricing has reached eye-watering levels, which is not surprising given the widely known reality that much of future 260 and 360 production is expected to be absorbed by military orders.

The King Air 350/350i market was where 2025 became truly interesting. This segment was hit hard by the influx of former Wheels Up tails hitting the market. In fact, the decline started before these aircraft hit the market, and the anticipation proved worse than reality.

The year started slowly for the 350/350i segment, and by summer the market was effectively dead – even nice, low-time 350i aircraft sat unsold. This changed by the end of the third quarter with low-time 350i planes disappearing from the market faster than pancakes on a Saturday morning.

The King Air 350/350i market took us on a wild ride in 2025, so what will 2026 hold? Let's start at the bottom and find our way there!

What to expect in 2026

As most of my regular readers know, my crystal ball died of COVID-19 back in 2020. The last five years have been anything but predictable. I think we are now seeing greater stability, but with high demand and an aging fleet, you really must dig in and evaluate each King Air submarket individually.

90 series outlook

- **Legacy 90s:** Values will likely be flat, with normal depreciation resuming as aircraft continue to age, meaning most aircraft will fall in price each year.

- **Newer 90s:** Expected to remain fairly flat and may represent some of the best value propositions for buyers.
- **Late model 90s:** Strong resale values should continue. The reality is that Beech just didn't build many and ended production, creating lasting scarcity.

200 series outlook

- **Legacy 200s:** Showing signs of weakness. As with the legacy 90 series, I expect normal annual depreciation to resume and values of these airframes to trend downward.
- **Newer & late model 200s:** These airframes are in high demand and I'm not seeing indications of lower prices. It is a very complicated market, though, and we still see discerning and strategic buyers able to purchase high-pedigree airframes below inflated market pricing.

300 series outlook

- **Early 300s (early 1990s 350 airframes):** These aircraft offer a lot of airplane for the money. It's not uncommon for us to find these airplanes priced similarly to well-kept B200s! The required type rating is a small price to pay for getting a double-club cabin and 295 knot speed.
- **Newer 300s (post serial No. 500):** Highly desirable models and I expect prices to increase if for no reason other than the aircraft above them selling for higher prices.
- **Late model 300s:** Later King Air 350i aircraft are seeing a resurgence in values now that the Wheels Up disruption has shaken out. The market has split between high-time, former Wheels Up airframes and low-time privately operated airframes. The potential buyer for one is different from the other. We see consistent values and plenty of availability in the higher-time units and skyrocketing prices and scarcity with the lower-time planes. I expect late-model, low-time King Air 350i and 360 aircraft values to continue increasing as demand far exceeds availability. As with the 260 market, limited availability of new deliveries to nonmilitary operators will continue to drive higher prices.

Value impact of the Garmin Autoland activation

It was bound to happen sooner rather than later: an incident in a King Air triggered Garmin's Autoland automated landing system.

Thankfully, there was no impact to the aircraft and, more importantly, no loss of life. In fact, the system performed flawlessly. It did exactly what it was designed to do – and the impact on the King Air market was immediate.

When news of the December 2025 incident emerged, Jet Acquisitions began hearing from prospective King Air buyers who stipulated that any suitable aircraft must either already be equipped with Garmin Autoland and Garmin Autothrottle or be upgradeable as part of the acquisition.

Meanwhile, the number of requests for Autoland/Autothrottle upgrade quotes being fielded by shops such as Elliott Aviation, Stevens Aerospace and Blackhawk multiplied.

If you own a King Air equipped with G1000 NXi and Garmin Autoland and Garmin Autothrottle, the value of your aircraft increased instantly.

While it is possible to purchase several different models of new aircraft that have this potentially life- and airframe-saving new technology, it is currently only available for retrofit on a King Air. Let me repeat: If you want to buy a used aircraft and add Autoland, the King Air is the only option. That means you can have an airplane with an acquisition cost sub $2 million with Garmin Autoland – a fraction of the cost of any new aircraft with an OEM install!

If one non-life-threatening event has driven this level of interest and market response, imagine the impact when Garmin lands an airplane full of people in an actual pilot-incapacitation scenario. The many available upgrades like this one only strengthen the long-term value proposition of the venerable King Air.

"... with high demand and an aging fleet, you really must dig in and evaluate each King Air submarket individually."

I focused a lot on the airframe age for this article because I suspect this will continue to be a larger factor in King Air values. In fact, you could almost draw a linear graph of desirability and overlay it with year of production and see them closely align.

For simplicity's sake, we could break it down by decades:

1979 and older: Values are likely at or near the bottom. Demand continues to drop.

1980-1989: Values face steady decline, even for well-maintained, low-time examples.

1990-1999: Values should remain fairly steady because these were years of low production numbers for Beechcraft. These aircraft are new enough to attract buyers seeking later-model feel without later-model pricing.

2000-2009: The year 2000 marks the informal break between older and newer. We unofficially refer to anything older than 2000 as legacy. Most prospective King Air buyers today prefer aircraft younger than 25 years old. The 2000-2007 B200 airframes are seeing high demand and are popular platforms for Blackhawk, Raisbeck and Garmin upgrades.

In 2008, the B200GT (-52 engines) replaced the -42-powered B200 and a few years later was superseded by the King Air 250 (-52 and winglets).

Another note in this decade: the 350 market has a second division at serial No. 500 (2006), when the superior Keith Freon Air Conditioning system was introduced.

2010-2019: These airframes are considered relatively new in the King Air world. Production volumes were modest, and many models of this vintage were exported when new. That means a limited pool of high-pedigree, U.S.-based King Airs that are 2010 or newer. Values are strong and I expect they will remain robust.

2020 and newer: Production numbers have declined since 2020 even with increased demand. Combined with military orders, this suggests privately held 260s and 360s will continue to have strong resale values – at least until the new Beechcraft Denali single-engine turboprop enters service and begins to satisfy some of the unmet demand.

Bottom line: Scarcity, pedigree and age will matter more than ever in 2026. I expect legacy airframes to continue to slowly decrease in value and later-model King Air aircraft to maintain values while near-new airframes increase their values. KA

Chip McClure has been in the aviation industry for more than 20 years. He and his wife, Amy, founded Jet Acquisitions in 2015. The firm exclusively represents turbine aircraft buyers and specializes in King Airs, as well as all models of current production turboprops and jets.

DIRECT FROM THE DPE

Habituation: An Old Term With a New Application

Embracing the new, seeking quality initial training and practicing are keys

by Joe Casey

PHOTO CREDIT: CLINT GOFF

It has been fun for me to be reintroduced into the world of pistols. As a helicopter pilot in the U.S. Army, my assigned weapon was the Beretta M9 (9mm) for my entire 26-year military career. I was reasonably good at shooting it on the pistol range, but I never really knew the nuances of being a good handgunner, thankfully never defending myself with it in real life. I knew the basics and had good eyesight (which allowed me to qualify each year) on the range. I was much more refined at deploying the Sikorsky UH-60 Black Hawk than at deploying the 9mm.

A few local friends of mine are true professionals with the pistol and with their encouragement I've joined a world that I have grown to enjoy: competitive pistol shooting. It has been so much fun to dive deep into a hobby that I think is fascinating! What has been most interesting is how the intricacies of aviation and shooting are similar. Thrust, weight, drag, gravity, airspeed and wind correction are terms that we use in aviation every time we fly and those terms are synonymous with terms that are used in the shooting world, such as ballistic coefficient, wind correction, drop, grain weight, projectile ›

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"If you are to overcome habituation, practice is not suggested, it is required!"

energy and terminal performance. A pilot will find easy translation between the two fields of study.

Although not as expensive as horses, skiing or aviation, pistol shooting does come at a cost and the first is buying a pistol. Just as in aviation, you'll hopefully find a quality instructor to guide you through the myriad makes and calibers. The next big decision you'll make: Will you use open sights or a red dot? Don't underestimate the weight of this decision! It has huge downstream ramifications to your approach to shooting.

Traditional open sights are still prevalently used with pistols. Line up the rear sight with the front sight and your target then pull the trigger. It's a little more nuanced than that, but a newbie to pistol shooting can usually group some shots with that rudimentary knowledge alone.

Humans have been doing this for centuries (arguably millennia) with success and it works. It works because it is easy to acquire the target and line up the sights. But there are problems. The human eye can only focus on one depth of field and when shooting we are supposed to focus on the front sight. This means the rear sight and the target should be slightly out of focus. This is not a big deal if you are shooting steel targets, but it can be a real problem if you've got an assailant (target) charging you and you need to defend yourself. It can also be a problem if you want to shoot your pistol at longer distances. It is hard to line up that which you cannot focus perfectly! But now we have a red dot available in the marketplace.

Improving with technology

A red dot is the colloquial name for a reflex sight that casts an illuminated reticle (usually a red dot, but I've seen a green dot too) on a glass lens mounted on the rear of the pistol. Look through the lens and place the red dot on the target and then pull the trigger. Assuming a proper bore sighting, the bullet should hit the target. The red dot is the new-fangled way to do it and it works really well. Like open sights, though, there are problems. Until the shooter has lots of practice, the red dot can be hard to find in the lens when indexing the pistol at a target. Also, the reflex sight is mounted on the pistol slide which slams back violently with each fired round. The red dot takes an immense amount of abuse. Manufacturers get better with every product iteration, but any electronic device can fail under such torture.

So, if you buy a pistol, should you buy a red dot for your pistol? In the field of practicality, the red dot certainly is more accurate. Shooting tests repetitively show that an amateur pistol shooter will shoot closer groups, be more accurate at greater distances and gain confidence faster with a red dot. As with aviation, the younger crowd loves the technology and has

gravitated nicely to the digital red dot. The older crowd has been far slower to migrate to the red dot.

The problem with the older crowd is habituation. Habituation occurs when patterns are created from repetitively doing an action for a long time. Old-timers have indexed open sight pistols thousands upon thousands of times, and it is simply an action that works. Changing to a red dot seems like an insurmountable obstacle, especially as we get older.

There is a lot of truth to the old axiom, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks!" It is not an ironclad statement that applies to everyone or every situation. But the older we get, the more habituation imprints and we simply don't want to change. Or, worse, we begrudgingly change. Anything you do begrudgingly will be done poorly, without heart and without gusto. And so it was when I went to a pistol competition recently.

There were about 20 competitors and I brought my Heckler & Koch VP9 Match pistol with a new red dot mounted. I practiced for about two weeks prior to the competition and felt secure with my burgeoning ability. I finished the competition in last place! Last place!! I felt so humiliated. My problem was my inability to acquire that red dot in the lens quickly. Even when other shooters used open sights, they were able to align their hand and eye with the target faster than I could, allowing them to shoot more accurately and consistently at a quicker pace. Although I had a *really* nice pistol and the latest gadgetry to ensure I was competitive, I found myself in last place!

Applying this discussion to King Air flying

Habituation is found everywhere in the world of aviation and it is important. We love to do what we've always done and we begrudgingly adopt the new and better ways of doing things. Sometimes we are forced to make a big avionics panel change when the attitude indicator fails with gusto and we are told the device is not supported any longer. Or, to get that digital autopilot you've been dreaming of, you must also purchase the newest digital primary flight display that is completely different from what you had before. Does your spouse want Autoland installed in your King Air? The only way to get that functionality is to upgrade the entire system to Garmin's G1000NXi and add autothrottle.

All this added functionality is fabulous, but it comes with the requirement that you learn some new tricks. If we are being truthful, it's not just a few tricks that must be learned – an entirely different scan must be developed.

A scan that works great for a six-pack flight display won't work for a digital Garmin display. The Garmin display will force your eye to move to different places on the panel to get the data you need. You will effectively have to learn an entirely new scan. And that Garmin display will provide you with a gob of data that was not available in the six-pack display. I absolutely *love* the flight path marker, the blue banana and the track vector. I think Synthetic Vision is singularly outstanding and I credit it to saving my life on a flight to Narsarsuaq, Greenland, when the weather was atrocious and my chips were down.

None of those fabulous offerings are available in older panels. Moving up in digital capability is great, but you must embrace the new. This is where we have problems in the King Air world.

To get good at your new-fangled panel, you must go flying and you must fly approaches. Approaches are flown at lower altitudes where you can visibly see the fuel gauges moving due to the high fuel burn. It's expensive to turn two PT6s simply so you can practice approaches, but no one said learning that new panel was going to be cheap! If you are to overcome habituation, practice is not suggested, it is required!

What this really means is that you must start some new habits, you must become newly habituated. It means that you should become habituated properly the first time. If you begrudgingly adopt new technologies or fail to get quality initial training to create the new habits, then you stand a strong chance of being in "last place" on your next flight, as I was at my pistol competition. If you get last place shooting steel targets in a pistol competition, you are just embarrassed. If you make a "last place" performance in your King Air with that new avionics panel when the weather unexpectedly turns sour or your chips are down, it could spell disaster.

Applying habituation to the real world

A good example of habituation that caused me grief is related to the use of autothrottles. In a King Air, we've been briefed on the importance of setting the power on takeoff and then adding friction to the power lever quadrant to keep the power levers from migrating aft. Tom Clements has been accurately articulate about the importance of adding the friction on the takeoff roll to preclude power lever migration. But when autothrottles are installed, the quadrant friction is not to be applied as the friction will inhibit the throttles from advancing or being adjusted by the autothrottle.

On a recent flight, I advanced the power levers, added friction and soon discovered the autothrottles failed on the takeoff roll. I'm now rolling down the runway at 50+ KIAS and had to abort the takeoff to figure out what happened. I announced my aborted takeoff, exited the runway and discovered that my habituation of adding friction on the takeoff roll precluded the autothrottle feature from working.

It was a simple problem, but change those conditions slightly (short runway, low visibility/ceiling, heavy) and this could have been a dastardly accident, all created because I had not created new habits. I was habituated to add the friction and I got "last place" on that takeoff attempt.

Moore's Law states that technology doubles every year and we've moved to a place in aviation where some truly incredible advancements are available to the King Air pilot who is willing to embrace the new. Are you one of those pilots? Do you like the new? If so, you'll have to overcome habituation to become truly good at the new. Will you be better for it? Certainly. But only if you get initial training from a great instructor and then practice, practice, practice.

Another interesting and relatable observation from my pistol competition is that the top five shooters all used the red dot. The top red dot shooters dominated the best of the best open sight shooters. If you want to win in competitive pistol shooting, you must shoot with the latest gadgetry. But you'll not just mount the red dot and go to the competition; you'll mount the red dot and then learn to shoot with that red dot.

The same goes for flying. If you want to give yourself the most advantage when shooting that precision approach to minimums in terrible weather with your family or employees in the back of the airplane, when the conditions suck but you really want to fly that flight, you'll want the best equipment on your airplane. You'll want to be equal to the task. Are you willing to overcome habituation to be as good as your aircraft?

If you own a King Air, you have arguably the greatest business and personal airplane on the planet. Are you up to the task of flying it well? My prayer is that you are. Don't just buy that new technology, learn to use all of it. Overcome habituation. KA

Joe Casey is the owner of Casey Aviation, Inc. based at Angelina County Airport (KLFK) in eastern Texas. The company manages four King Air aircraft and provides flight training in many models of airplanes. He has 19,300 hours of total flight time, over 4,500 of which are in King Air airframes. He is a certified ATP-ME/SE commercial pilot with ASES, Rotorcraft-Helicopter/Instrument and Glider ratings. Casey is also a Designated Pilot Examiner (DPE) with many authorizations from Sport Pilot through ATP, CFI-Initial and the BE-300 type rating issuing authority up to the ATP level and holds CFI, CFII, MEI, CFI-H, CFI-IH and CFI-G certificates. He has flown 83 North Atlantic crossings in King Air aircraft.

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FEATURE

Making Friends With Queen Air C-FWZG

Flying airborne geophysical survey missions in the King Air's foremother

by Robert S. Grant

On Aug. 6, 1998, Queen Air C-FWZG waited for survey modifications in Toronto, Canada. Twenty years later, Sander Geophysics took the aircraft to western France.

PHOTO COURTESY: MIKE ODY VIA GEORGE TRUSSELL/JOHN RODNEY

The instant the water bottle touched my lips, gusts generated by stone-walled castles and manors below our 50-foot, 6-inch two-spar wing forced the container airborne. Beside me, in the aircraft's 266-cubic-foot interior, the copilot's seeping airsickness bag flopped onto the floor and split. Steady on heading, I contemplated why I happened to be 400 feet above the column-like poplar trees of western France.

On Sept. 12, 1998, chief pilot Jan Kristiansen of Ottawa's Sander Geophysics presented me with the opportunity to crew a Beechcraft Queen Air 65-B80 far from Canada's snow-blasted forests and frozen waters. First flown on Aug. 28, 1958, as a corporate six-to-nine seat executive carrier, the factory's wonder machine weighed 6,030 pounds empty and by 1962 it marketed for $139,860.

Early reports termed the airplane "dumpy" yet pilots pointed out that ground handling came as easy to them as riding a bicycle. A lavatory with folding bulkhead door

provided privacy in the 9-foot cabin and double-panel windows brought "true vista vision" to everyone aboard. Although the Queen Air may not have been considered graceful in form, marketing data claimed passengers retained their grace and dignity when using a novel airline-like boarding stair to step into a structure tested beyond 6.6 Gs.

Queen Air 65-B80s roamed the world. A few tracked northbound into wilderness and excelled as backwoods passenger carriers and freighters. Powered by six-cylinder IGSO-540 piston engines blasting out 380 horsepower each, they hauled everything from peanuts to people. Assembly line workers and designers would never have envisioned their unpressurized product frightening farm life while conquering high terrain in western Europe.

Coils and cables

Sander's C-FWZG, serial number LD-386, emigrated north of the border in 1968 and worked within the airborne survey regime for the Canadian government's Department of Mines and Resources until 1989.

This special niche aircraft appeared occasionally during my previous life flogging float and ski planes above coniferous woodlands. The thought of operating such a powerful twin never came to mind until Kristensen's call. Formed by Dr. George W. Sander in 1956, the company had already mobilized and ferried the aircraft along the North Atlantic route to European shorelines.

Considered Beechcraft's heaviest twin-engine ship since World War II, C-FWZG's advertised 195-knot cruise speed would not be required nor would altitudes such as the 34,882-foot record established in 1960. Minimum survey speed was listed at 112 knots, consuming 225 gallons per hour of 100/130 on line and 1,640 feet from the adjacent track. Modified to reduce magnetic signature by replacing components with stainless steel or aluminum, the underside of Sander's Queen Air used glass-covered camera mounts. The interior's elegant wood-paneled walls no longer existed and two-pilot seating with a rear equipment operator's place became standard. The toilet had been removed and plastic pails substituted.

Originally, two attention-getting stingers or booms, approximately 6 feet apart, adorned the vertical

A&P Michael McMurchy never complained about performing aircraft inspections in coastal France's damp climate. Without work stands, he appreciated C-FWZG's easy engine access.

PHOTO CREDIT: ROBERT S. GRANT

stabilizer and another 9.84-foot unit extended from the nose with a 175-knot restriction. Electrical equipment, coils and cables inhabited the interiors of each one. Multi-channeled receivers, recording computers and plastic-encased cables filled the cabin. An airborne data acquisition system, activated 5 miles from start-of-line, measured and catalogued signals transmitted into French soil and returned to cutting-edge sensors.

Numerous geophysical survey aircraft depended on the well-mapped Ottawa region for field calibration. Many configurations adorned C-FWZG before Robert S. Grant's experience with single boom versions in France.

PHOTO COURTESY: ROB DAY

A pilot steering indicator with horizontal and vertical needles provided directional commands with a radar altimeter keeping us clear of plowed fields infested with windmills and power lines. Situational awareness took priority in our microworld. This would be no tourist junket.

Daily newspaper Ouest-France informed the populace that Sander would be overflying areas seeking surface breaks where pollutants might bleed into local aquifers or fractures susceptible to radioactive substances. Sander Geophysics expected crews to maintain accuracy as precise as 6.56 feet and function within a world of key punches and bulging bladders.

Getting to know C-FWZG

My first international assignment meant an airline journey to Heathrow, England, followed by a shuttle to Paris before a two-hour jaunt by speed train to Rennes, 191 miles west of the Eiffel Tower.

A team of 10 pilots, A&Ps and geophysicists waited on site with C-FWZG beside a similarly modified Britten-Norman Islander. After takeoff using 35.8 inches of mercury and 2,600 rpm with training pilot Seigfried Hippolyte, the flight brought us 40 miles north to the English Channel for familiarization, air work and instrument calibration.

During steep turns and 80-miles-per-hour stalls, the rudder buffeted slightly but retained full aileron control as the aircraft mushed. Heavy rain on return with gusts almost exceeding the placarded 17-knot crosswind maximum caused two extra approaches but fortunately, Hippolyte pronounced the "new-kid-on-the-block" competent.

Later, an indiscreet report by a high-time airline captain stated Queen Airs "should be flown by someone who flies constantly and preferably by a professional pilot if full advantage is to be taken of all the (air)plane has to offer." In the next eight weeks, it became clear that no aspect of handling the type would pose problems for low-timers.

I soon discovered that France's air transportation laws decreed that a French citizen must occupy the copilot seat. Most arrived as recent flight school graduates, slavering to log multi-engine hours. With perpetual turbulence and gasoline odours, mal de mer – or seasickness – quickly entered the picture. To mitigate fatigue, we alternated 30-minute lines as long as five intense hours. Despite incapacitated copilots and sharp-tasting French cheese for lunch, the task came across as preferable to digging ski planes out of northern snow back home.

Unfortunately, relaxing in an 8,800-pound gross weight Queen Air came with hazards. Vigilance for birds became paramount. A company manual cautioned that the flickering little creatures folded their wings and dove below our six propeller blades. Evasive turns or abrupt pull-ups to avoid them might create stalls and bank angles could not exceed 30 degrees to prevent tarnishing data readings. Operations manager Brian Clark pointed out that birds possessed tiny brains and were "very stupid."

Adventures on land and aloft

During days off duty, life in France allowed drives through the ›

$50,000 TRADE-IN CREDIT FOR PRO LINE 21
KING AIRS UPGRADING TO G1000 NXi

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When operated by Canada's Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, C-FWZG carried several boom configurations. In later years, Sander Geophysics used lighter, less drag-producing units.

PHOTO COURTESY: ROB DAY

Under their differing paint jobs, these two Beechcrafts are basically one and the same. Same size, same power, same rugged go-anywhere dependability.

She leads a double life

IN CIVILIAN CIRCLES, she's known as the Beechcraft Queen Air 65—famous the world over as the ultimate in executive and personal transportation. No other plane anywhere near the Queen Air's size can match her for speed, comfort, roominess and rugged reliability.

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- Separate passenger salon with center aisle lets top men work in "conference room" surroundings and comfort while they go fast to all the places where their decisions are needed.
- Private lavatory—plus big separate baggage compartment, accessible in flight.

Yet under the Queen Air's glamorous civilian paint and plush upholstery, she's built rugged and right. The same extra strength and durability that makes her such a favorite as the L-23F also helps keep maintenance costs down in civilian service.

IN HER WAR PAINT, she's the U. S. Army L-23F. In wide use both here and abroad, she has distinguished herself as a rugged and versatile utility transport. The Army can't afford to "baby" any airplane—and the men who fly her certainly don't pamper the Beechcraft L-23F.

Day after day, in all kinds of weather all over the world, the L-23F flies into and out of the roughest, unimproved fields—and does it with ease. Most any kind of load is all in the day's work. With quickly-removable passenger seats, the L-23F can be a flying station wagon one day and a litter-laden flying ambulance the next. Or it can haul a wide variety of cargo fast to wherever it's needed.

And because it can carry all the nav/comm equipment normally used by even the largest planes (and costs less to fly) the L-23F is widely used as an instrument trainer for pilot proficiency.

The L-23F is one of the easiest to fly airplanes ever built—another big reason for its success in civilian life as the Beechcraft Queen Air 65.

Write today for ☐ New illustrated folder on the Beechcraft Queen Air 65. ☐ Low-cost Beech Financing & Leasing Plans. Address Public Relations Dept., Beech Aircraft Corp., Wichita 1, Kansas, U. S. A.

Beechcraft

The World Is Small When You Fly A BEECHCRAFT

A historic ad for the Queen Air, the foremother to the King Air.

countryside and the exploration of Rennes in the Brittany region proved educational. An ancient centre, its history reached back 2,000 years. A green belt surrounded the boundaries and fields teemed with farm animals, including pigs weighing up to 1,200 pounds. The airport hosted numerous vintage jets and classic radial engine antiques. Life aloft in a comfortable Queen Air and relaxation times seemed grand.

Foreign travel, decent salary and historic castles framed by wind-tickled poplar trees turned the contract into holiday time despite fluids from overfilled "sugar sacks" desecrating our boots. Everyone stayed happy until ebony-black rivulets creeping from the left engine caught our attention less than two hours after departure. A prompt precautionary landing at former Luftwaffe base Morlaix followed. One gallon of oil remained in the engine.

The A&Ps spent evenings dismantling, probing and engine running but found no faults. Slightly skeptical, we returned to French airspace and continued monitoring our left-right up-down needles while holding precise tolerances and experienced no further issues.

Years later, high-time pilot Rob Day, who had also flown C-FWZG, recalled powerplant vibrations that necessitated a jug or cylinder change. His final incident led to a replacement engine after sessions above the roiling rollers of Lake Huron.

Day spoke highly of C-FWZG. An experienced Arctic pilot, he never encountered complete failure or fully feathered propellers. A landing gear malfunction, however, brought tense moments after a series of north-south lines over Lake Superior's ice-cold rollers on Michigan's shoreline. The right main landing gear decided not to lower and lock.

"We did the usual things, you know, like turns and pull-ups before using the emergency system, which meant blowing it down with a wheel well nitrogen cylinder. That worked. When we landed in Michigan on the lake's south side, there was a stream of hydraulic fluid behind us," he recalled. "Coming back to Canada, we flew gear down. That was interesting since you're not going as fast as normal and cylinder head temperatures weren't coming up. I'm not a big fan of being over water and was happy to reach the north shore."

Like Day and pilots before him, we flew with one generator off, avoided data-interfering radio calls and never activated landing lights as video recorders taped our tracks. After the first week, sunny skies dissipated into low cloud, constant rain and crosswinds that reached up to 30 knots. Formerly friendly Atlantic breezes collided with rolling terrain and forced us into wrestling controls, plunging toward corn fields and slamming the control column forward. One copilot filled three airsickness bags in 45 minutes. Raindrops scuttling across the windshield created red-rimmed eyes as we strained to peer forward. Data in such conditions

Our author credits superb maintenance for keeping operations smooth during his eight-week contract flying this Queen Air 65-B80 in western Europe.

PHOTO CREDIT: ROBERT S. GRANT

proved useless and error messages or turbulence forced us back to base.

Interceptions became an art. Height lost or gained needed corrections before settling inbound on reciprocal headings. Rapid closures toward adjacent lines needed adjustment. At the end of each fresh line, a cockpit mini-terminal indicated the next parallel path. In the process, dropped pencils rolled out of recovery range but keeping the beakers (geophysicists) content became the name of the game. Every team member, including non-pilots, understood the attributes of a stable Beechcraft Queen Air.

Bidding adieu

When my last flight took place Oct. 19, 1998, with departure from France imminent, C-FWZG and I had become friends in spite of the airline captain's admonition. No fresh wrinkles, cracked wheels or corrosion marred its pristine condition. Superb maintenance kept operations smooth.

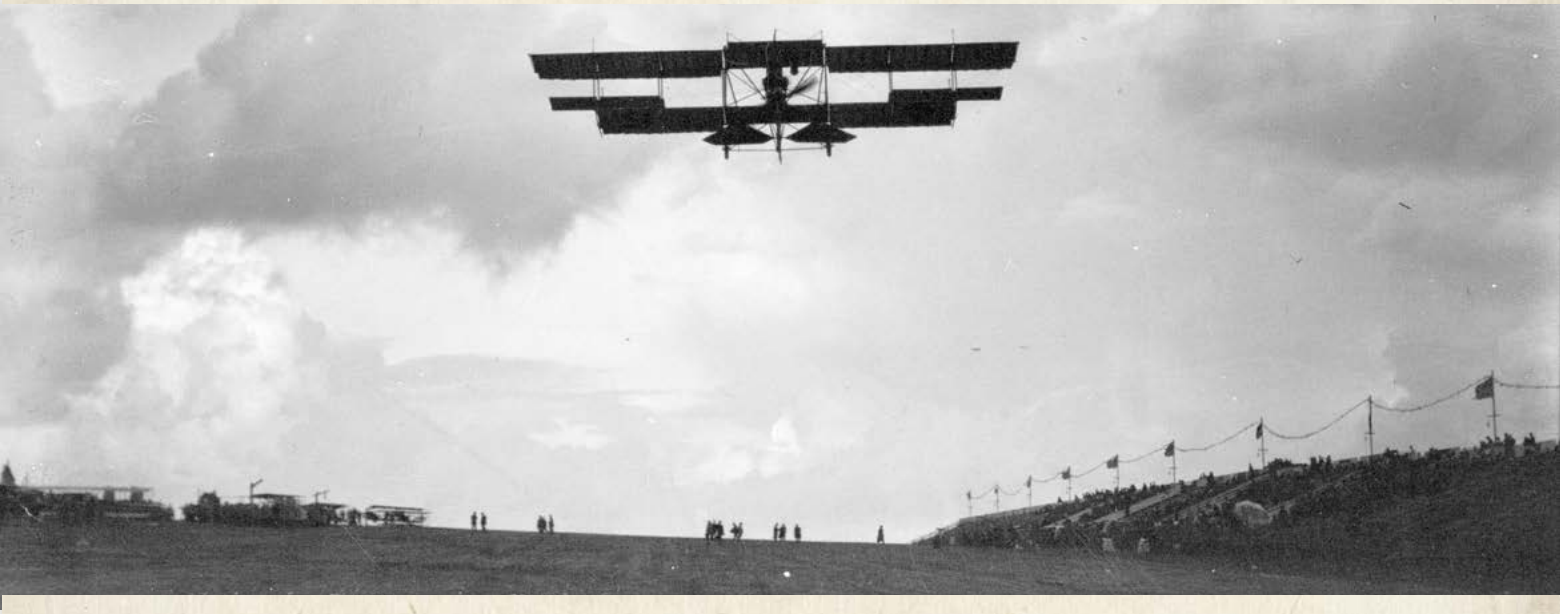
Chances of encountering another Queen Air in my future became unlikely since most geophysical organizations invested in lower-maintenance turbine-powered types. On July 7, 1964, the Wichita Eagle newspaper announced the first delivery of a certified turboprop-powered airplane to United Aircraft of Canada. Beech Aircraft Corporation president Mrs. Olive Anne Beech presented the keys and King Airs soon dominated the market.

As for my friend, C-FWZG, the fine example of Wichita engineering crept southbound to Colombia in 2001. We never met again. KA

Robert S. Grant has published more than 2,500 articles in six countries as well as a bimonthly column for a Canadian west coast magazine. He has accumulated 20,200 accident-free hours in his flying career, including 5,300 on seaplanes, beginning in a fabric-covered hand-started Aeronca Champion. He operated Beechcraft King Air A100s in central and eastern Canada as well as during a five-month contract for Yellowknife's Buffalo Airways. Grant also spent 15 years in African nations and flew his first King Air 200 in Chad for U.S.-based humanitarian organization Air Serv. He lives in Ottawa and hopes to fly again in a Beechcraft.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

FIRST WOMAN TO SOLO IN THE USA 1910



Blanche Scott or Bessie Raiche?

By Dennis K. Johnson

Just seven years after the Wright Brothers flew at Kitty Hawk, two women joined the ranks of American aviators. Blanche Scott and Bessie Raiche each made solo flights in 1910, the first women in America to do so.

Today, historians are fairly certain that Blanche flew before Bessie, but in 1910, there was some confusion with newspapermen reporting on one pilot without knowing about the other. Additionally, Blanche's first flight may have been "unintentional" and that seemed to matter to some people. Subsequently, a few history books credit Blanche with the first flight, but Bessie with the first "intentional" flight. Intentional or not, both women should be remembered.

Blanche Stuart Scott

Blanche, who also went by Betty, was born in Rochester, New York, on April 8, 1885. Like many Americans, she was fascinated by the latest contraptions, especially the automobile. She was driving her father's car at age 13 and terrorizing local pedestrians. In 1910, she became the second woman to drive across the United States, taking 67 days to cross from New York City to San Francisco.

Her cross-country journey made her a minor celebrity, so the manager of Glenn Curtiss' Flying Exhibition Company invited her to join the team, thinking it would be good advertising. But first, she needed to learn to fly and Curtiss taught her at his flight school in Hammondsport, New York. As was common at the time, a device was installed on the throttle of the airplane to limit the rpm

Blanche Scott was a teen when the Wright Brothers first flew at Kitty Hawk and lived to see men walk on the moon.

and prevent it from becoming airborne. In August or early September, while Blanche was practicing taxiing, either the limiter slipped or a strong gust of wind lifted the aircraft into the air. Some considered this an "unintentional" flight, but Blanche claimed she made "short hops" and then "intentional flights" soon thereafter. Years later, the Early Birds of Aviation – a group founded in 1928 whose members had all flown before 1916 – credited her as the first woman to solo an airplane in the United States.

Blanche joined the Curtiss exhibition team, becoming the first woman to fly in an airshow in America. The press dubbed her the Tomboy of the Air and she became known for her daring stunt flying. She set several long-distance records for female pilots with flights up to 60 miles and was featured in a silent film, "The Aviator's Bride," filmed at Mineola, New York, in 1911.

In 1913, she suffered a serious crash that required a year of recuperation and she retired from professional flying in 1916. In the 1930s, Blanche worked as a scriptwriter for Hollywood studios and later returned to Rochester, where she produced and performed on radio shows.

She became the first American woman to fly in a jet in 1948 when she was the passenger in a Lockheed Shooting Star piloted by Chuck Yeager at Cleveland's National Air Races. In 1954, she was employed by the United States Air Force Museum (now known as the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force) to acquire artifacts. Blanche died Jan. 12, 1970, at age 84.

Bessie Raiche

Born Bessica Faith Medlar on April 23, 1875, in Beloit, Wisconsin, Bessie's timeline is hard to determine. At some point she was working as a dentist in New Hampshire and then attended Tufts Medical School in Boston where she earned a medical degree in 1903. Along the way, she married a Frenchman, François Raiche, whom she'd met during European travels and they moved to Mineola on Long Island.

While visiting France in 1908, Bessie and François saw Wilbur Wright demonstrate the Wright Flyer and they became enamored of aviation. When they returned home, they built their own biplane, like the Wright Brothers' design, fabricating much of it in their living room with the final assembly taking place in the yard.

Although Blanche had made several flights in early September while training with Curtiss, Bessie was the first woman to announce she would fly and do it publicly.

Likely because Bessie was lighter, the couple had decided she would make the first flights. Neither had any training and on Sept. 16, 1910, Bessie made the first well-documented solo airplane flight by a woman in the United States at the Hempstead Plains Aerodrome. She

On Sept. 16, 1910, Bessie Raiche made the first well-documented solo airplane flight by a woman in the U.S.

Bessie Raiche at the wheel.

made five flights that day with the last covering nearly a mile, similar to the Wright Brothers' first day of flying. The last flight ended in an accident.

A local newspaper account stated: "She scrambled to her feet and before any of the mechanics and others who had witnessed the fall of the biplane could reach her, she had shut off the engine and stopped the propeller. She calmly said she was not injured. ..."

Over the next few weeks, Bessie made more flights and the Aeronautical Society of America credited her with the first solo flight. On Oct. 13, 1910, they awarded her a gold medal studded with diamonds and inscribed "The First Woman Aviator in America."

"Blanche deserved the recognition, but I got more attention because of my lifestyle," Bessie said. "I drove an automobile, was active in sports like shooting and swimming, and I even wore riding pants and knickers."

The Raiches formed the French-American Aeroplane Company, which built and sold a few airplanes before Bessie became ill, forcing her to give up flying.

Moving to California, Bessie opened a medical practice specializing in obstetrics and gynecology in Newport Beach in 1912. The couple divorced in 1925, and Bessie died of a heart attack in 1932 at the age of 56.

Monuments & Remembrance

In 1980, the U.S. Postal Service issued an airmail stamp commemorating Blanche's achievements and in 2005, she was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame. Her childhood home still stands at 116 Weld Street in Rochester, New York, and her grave is also in Rochester at Riverside Cemetery, Section T, Lot 524, Grave 2.

In 2023, a statue of Bessie was installed at the Long Island Railroad station at Mineola, New York, not far from where she lived. It's 1.5 miles west of Roosevelt Field shopping mall, the former Roosevelt Field and 2.5 miles from the Cradle of Aviation Museum. She is entombed at the Fairhaven Memorial Park in Santa Ana, California, in the Historical Mausoleum, Room 1, Space 165. Bessie's Diner at Southern Wisconsin Regional Airport (KJVL) near her hometown is a great spot to have breakfast or lunch in her honor.

Pioneering legacies

Blanche likely made the first flights by a woman in America, but in the privacy of Curtiss' upstate New York flight school, so Bessie received more press coverage. After all this controversy, remember that it was a French woman, Raymonde de Laroche, who was the first woman to pilot a plane, Oct. 22, 1909.

Let's honor Blanche, Bessie and Raymonde, not as rivals for aviation records but as women who defied the norms of their time and as pioneers in aviation. KA

Dennis K. Johnson is an aviation writer and pilot living in New York City.

FILM ABOUT AMERICA'S OVERLOOKED FEMALE WWII AVIATORS NEEDS SUPPORT

The Red Door Films production company found out in Spring 2025 that a significant National Endowment for the Humanities grant it had been awarded would be rescinded due to sudden and unprecedented cuts by the Department of Government Efficiency. Without those funds, Oscar-nominated director Matia Karrell and producer Hilary Prentice have not been able to complete the first feature-length documentary about Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) and other early female pilots.

The post-production gap to finish "Coming Home: Fight for a Legacy" is $400,000, and among the team's fundraising efforts are seeking corporate donations, asking for grassroots donations and establishing a ticketed virtual event series. "Every donation helps," Prentice said. "We are striving to complete the film by the end of this year – it all depends on the funding, of course."

To donate, visit the film's Women Make Movies website at *tinyurl.com/ComingHomeFlyGirls*. Get updates on the project at *seedandspark.com/fund/fight-for-a-legacy* or by following the film's Facebook page at *facebook.com/FlygirlsWW2*.

The film's synopsis: "Coming Home: Fight for a Legacy" is a ground-breaking documentary that tells the story of the daring women who performed heroically in the U.S. military's first all–female Air Force program, called the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP). When Congress suddenly disbanded the program in 1944, and banned women pilots from the military in 1948, these female pilots were effectively erased from history. In the 1970s they fought for recognition and achieved veteran status, but when one of them passed away and is denied burial in Arlington National Cemetery in 2016, these WASP veterans realized the fight for their legacy continued, even in death.

This is the first feature-length film documentary about the WASP and demonstrates the power of elder women as they make one last push to reclaim their rightful place in history.

"Coming Home" also features the African American women pilots who flew at Tuskegee, as they were denied entry into the WASP due to the segregation of the U.S. military at that time. Included in the film is a never-before-seen interview with Mildred Hemmons Carter, who was awarded WASP status in 2011, shortly before her death. Consulting and interviewing historians, military historians, aviation experts and journalists, the film will address the contribution of women to aviation, how race and gender impacted the experiences of these WWII pilots and why remembering this history is important today. KA

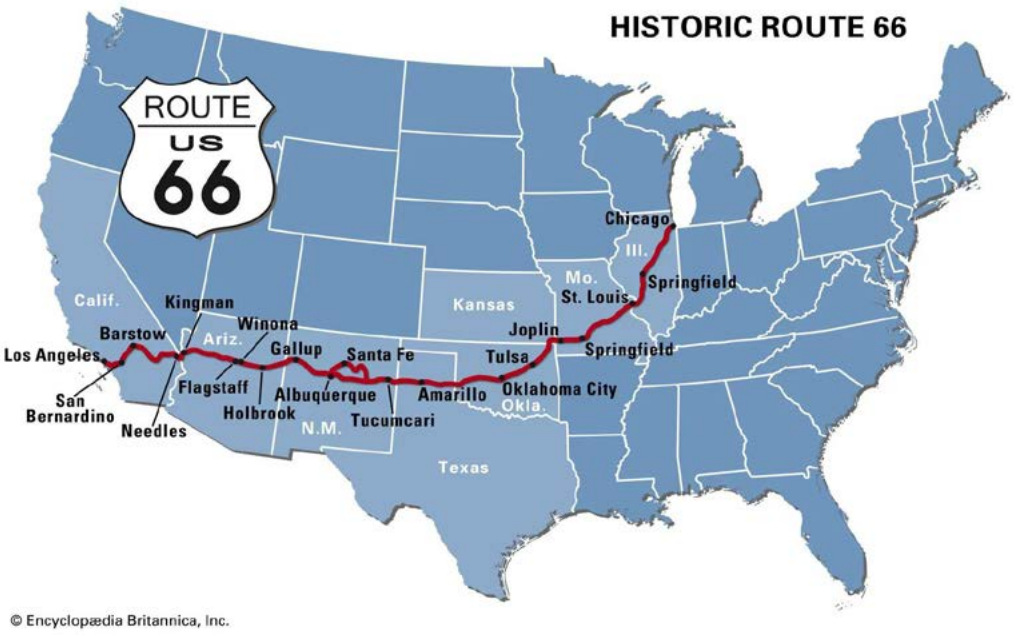
TRAVELOGUE

HEAD OUT ON THE HIGHWAY

Legendary Route 66 turns 100

by MeLinda Schnyder

Hundreds of communities across eight states are planning events and activities to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Route 66, a historic federal highway synonymous with freedom and adventure. Designated as U.S. Highway 66 on April 30, 1926, the highway connected Chicago and Los Angeles, providing a reliable route through the Midwest. Officially established on Nov. 11, 1926, it spanned approximately 2,500 miles across Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California.



Route 66 Air Tour

Aviation enthusiast Alan Winninger is organizing the Route 66 Air Tour (*route66airtour.com*), inspired by his work on the 2003 National Air Tour commemorating 100 years of flight. He aims to highlight the connections between Route 66 and aviation, including Charles Lindbergh's choice of Winslow, Arizona, for his 1929 Transcontinental Air Transport airport and the presence of Ford products and Phillips 66 fuel on the road and in the air during Route 66's early days.

Winninger envisions interested pilots flying the route together over a week, starting in Chicago with low-altitude daytime flights. They'll stop at historic general aviation airports where communities can host events for all ages. Companies or individual pilots interested in participating can contact him at *alan@route66centennial.us*.

Initially, only a third of the road was paved, with the rest consisting of gravel, dirt, or wooden planks. It became the first completely paved U.S. highway in 1938, but the Interstate Highway Act of 1956 marked the beginning of its decline.

By the 1970s, the highway was no longer a primary transportation route. Even as the modern, efficient interstate system began bypassing the meandering highway, Route 66 had secured its place in pop culture, history and the hearts of road-trippers by the time it was officially decommissioned in 1985.

Today, Route 66 offers a diverse range of experiences, from cityscapes and open highways to ghost towns and urban areas. Visitors can explore legendary scenery, historic sites, museums, car collections, quirky landmarks, mom-and-pop eateries and neon-lit motels.

Reroutes, realignments, and reconstructions over the years make it difficult to trace the original road, but about 85% of the route is still drivable today. Some sections are scenic byways, state highways or frontage roads, not a continuous, signed route.

The original western terminus of downtown Los Angeles was extended to Santa Monica in 1936 and to the Santa Monica Pier in 2009. Last month, Chicago moved its most eastern point from downtown to the Navy Pier, creating a pier-to-pier connection.

Looking for adventure?

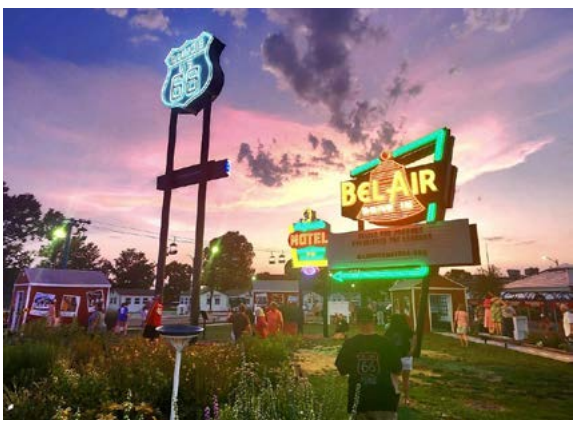
Route 66 formed the main street through most of the towns it touched and the shift in traffic affected these communities. A surge in nostalgia once the road was decommissioned fueled preservation and restoration efforts in the early 1990s as has this year's centennial celebration. Here's what to expect in each state.

Big Ron at Motorheads, Springfield, IL
PHOTO CREDIT: VISIT SPRINGFIELD

Illinois

~301 miles diagonally from Chicago to St. Louis through farmland, small towns, cities, then crossing the Mississippi River – though you'll travel more than 400 miles to take in all three of the state's historic alignments

Don't miss: In Springfield, explore 92 communities along Illinois' Route 66 with one stop at the year-round Illinois State Fair Route 66 Experience; grab a corndog at Cozy Dog Drive In; spend a few hours at the Route 66 Motorheads Bar & Grill, Museum & Entertainment Complex.



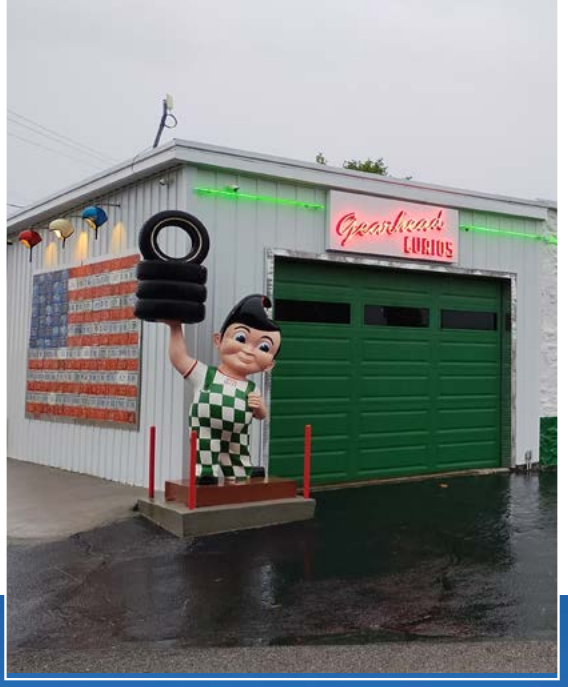
The Illinois State Fair Route 66 Experience, Springfield, IL
PHOTO CREDIT: VISIT SPRINGFIELD

Missouri

~317 miles from St. Louis diagonally to the southwest corner of the state through Ozark landscapes

Don't miss: Springfield earned "Birthplace of Route 66" status when the name for the new road was sent via telegram from there during a planning meeting on April 30, 1926. See the original transmission and other fun displays at the History Museum on the Square. Book the room where Elvis Presley stayed in 1956 when performing in Springfield. The Elvis room at the Best Western Route 66 Rail Haven features photos – including one of Elvis' mother in the room during his stay – and the tail end of a pink Cadillac transformed into a sofa.

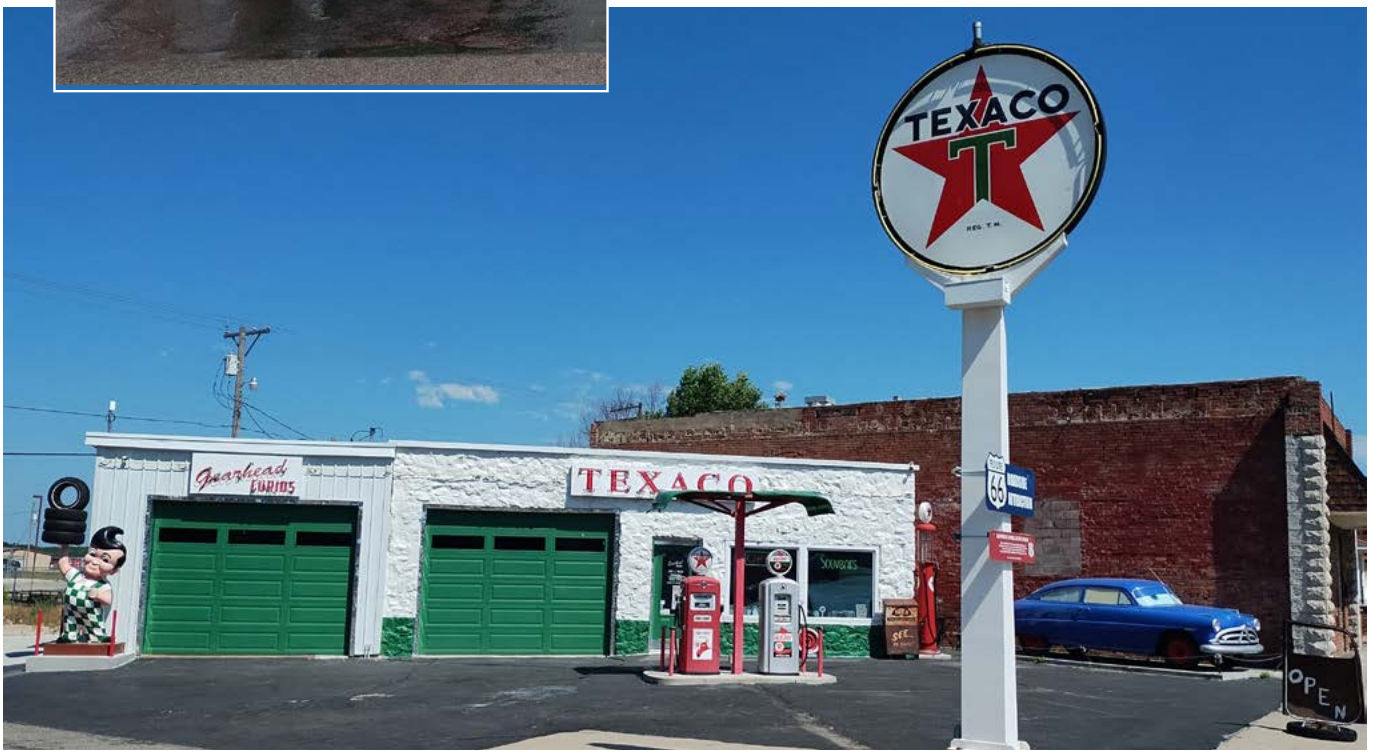
Best Western Route 66 Rail Haven, Springfield, MO
PHOTO CREDIT: MELINDA SCHNYDER



Kansas

~13 miles cross the state's southeast corner among the mining communities of Galena, Riverton and Baxter Springs

Don't miss: The shortest stretch of any state, Kansas offers fun stops at the Gearhead Curios shop in a converted Texaco station and the only surviving Marsh arch bridge on the route. Brush Creek Bridge, or the Rainbow Bridge, is a concrete and steel truss design patented in 1912.



Gearhead Curios, Galena, KS

PHOTO CREDIT: KANSAS TOURISM

Oklahoma Route 66 Museum, Clinton, OK

PHOTO CREDIT: OKLAHOMA TOURISM

Oklahoma

~432 miles between the northeast border with Kansas and traveling diagonally southwest through Tulsa and Oklahoma City before exiting near Texola; the route crosses from eastern woodlands to western prairies

Don't miss: Give yourself plenty of time to explore roadside attractions, from the whimsical 80-foot-long concrete Blue Whale of Catoosa to the 76-foot-tall Golden Driller statue in Tulsa. There are also car and transportation museums along the route, including the Oklahoma Route 66 Museum in Clinton.

Texas

~186 miles straight across the panhandle takes travelers through rolling plains and expansive, flat high plains where Amarillo is the largest city

Don't miss: The state's most photographed Route 66 attraction is Cadillac Ranch near Amarillo. Bring a can of spray paint to contribute to this public art experiment featuring 10 graffiti-covered Cadillacs partially buried nose-down in a wheat field. Forty miles to the west, you'll reach Midpoint Café and Gift Shop in Adrian, where you'll want a piece of pie and a photo of signage showing you've reached the route's official midpoint: 1,139 miles to Chicago and 1,139 miles to Santa Monica.

Cadillac Ranch, Amarillo, TX

PHOTO CREDIT: MELINDA SCHNYDER

New Mexico

~487 miles (an estimated 265 miles of the original route are still drivable) pass mesas, red rock outcroppings and pueblo-style architecture as the road travels straight across the central part of the state including the cities of Tucumcari, Santa Rosa, Albuquerque and Gallup

Don't miss: Make time for the scenic Santa Fe Loop, which adds about 100 miles by following the original alignment from Santa Rosa up to Santa Fe then travels down to Albuquerque. The route was straightened to follow the modern I-40 corridor by 1937.

Pecos National Historical Park near Santa Fe, NM

PHOTO CREDIT: NEW MEXICO TRUE

Make Plans

If you're planning to explore Route 66, consider these tools:

The U.S. Route 66 Centennial Commission has a robust website at *route66centennial.org* with events listed by date and by state along with official activities and initiatives.

Active Route 66 Associations in all eight states and several foreign countries can be found online.

Find itineraries and other resources on websites for state tourism agencies and destination marketing organizations of communities along the route.

Drive-thru shield, Kingman, AZ

Route 66 western end-point sign, Santa Monica, CA

PHOTO CREDIT: DAVID COLLIER FOR VISIT CALIFORNIA

Arizona

~401 miles (approximately 250 drivable) through northern Arizona hits the major towns of Holbrook, Winslow, Flagstaff, Williams, Seligman and Kingman as well as ghost towns while traversing pine-filled mountains, painted desert and high-altitude volcanic landscapes

Don't miss: The Kingman Visitor Center is home to the Arizona Route 66 Museum and the Electric Vehicle Museum plus a drive-thru shield popular for photo ops. The city calls itself the Heart of Historic Route 66 because it's within the longest remaining stretch of original highway (158 miles).

California

~314 miles through Southern California span empty desert highways to congested Los Angeles freeways, passing through Needles, Mojave National Preserve, Oro Grande, San Bernardino, San Gabriel Valley, Pasadena and LA before ending at the Pacific Ocean in Santa Monica

Don't miss: Posing for a photo at the end of the trail signpost on the historic Santa Monica Pier. KA

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TECHNICALLY

Textron Aviation Mandatory Service Letter MTL-27-05: Flight Controls – Elevator Bellcrank Inspection

Published date: Feb. 10, 2026

Effectivity: F90 S/Ns LA-2 thru LA-236; 200/B200 S/Ns BB-2 thru BB-2019; 200C/B200C S/Ns BL-1 thru BL-171; 200T/B200T S/Ns BT-1 thru BT-43; 200CT/B200CT SNs BN-1 thru BN-4; B200GT S/Ns BY-1 and on; B200CGT S/Ns BZ-1 and on; 300 S/Ns FF-1 thru FF-19; 300/300LW S/Ns FA-1 thru FA-230; B300 S/Ns FL-1 and on; B300C S/Ns FM-1 and on, FN-1

NOTE: Airplanes that have 30,000 flight hours or more will need to complete this service document and airplanes that have less the 30,000 flight hours will need to complete this service document upon reaching 30,000 flight hours.

Reason: It has been found that the elevator bob weight bellcrank has been cracking with airplanes close to or exceeding 30,000 flight hours. If the bellcrank is cracked this may cause a failure within the elevator flight control system.

NOTE: Airplanes with bob weights which have accumulated less than 30,000 flight hours must accomplish this service document upon reaching 30,000 flight hours.

Description: This service document provides parts and instructions to do a visual inspection on both sides of the elevator bellcrank for cracks and if cracks are found, replace the bellcrank as necessary.

Compliance – Mandatory: If the flight hours are less than 30,000 hours, comply upon reaching 30,000 hours. If the flight hours are greater than or equal to 30,000 hours, comply within 400 hours of receipt of this service letter.

Textron Aviation Mandatory Service Letter MTL-31-03: Indicating/ Recording Systems

Published date: Oct. 30, 2025

Effectivity: B200GT S/Ns BY-432, BY-470 thru BY-472, BY-474 thru BY-477, BY-479, BY-481, BY-482

Reason: To remove the Cabin Accent Lights switch from the flight compartment overhead for aircraft with slick interior configuration installed.

Description: This service document provides instructions to remove the Cabin Accent Lights switch from the flight compartment overhead switch panel for the slick interior configuration.

Compliance – Mandatory: This service document must be accomplished within 200 flight hours or 12 months from the date of receipt, whichever occurs first.

The above information is abbreviated for space purposes. For the entire communications, go to *txtavsupport.com*. KA

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