

NEWS RELEASE

Miami hub turns 30

9/16/2019

Each month in American Way, we feature an article written from the perspective of an American Airlines team member — a unique way to connect the airline's customers with the people who care for them on life's journey. For the September issue, we're highlighting the 30th anniversary of our Miami hub, featuring the perspective of GSE Automotive Mechanic Crew Chief Tony Gomez. Check out his message to our customers below.

Tony Gomez

For the last 46 years, I've called Miami International Airport (MIA) my professional home — first at Braniff International Airways, followed by Piedmont Airlines. On Oct. 22, 1983, I made the move to American Airlines, and I've proudly been a part of the company ever since.

Back then, about 125 of us ran American's operation, and with only five daily flights, it was like running our own small business. I started as a Fleet Service Clerk, loading and unloading bags. But a year later, I became the airline's first Automotive Mechanic at MIA, fixing and maintaining the ground service equipment used to transport baggage and cargo.

By 1989, we were up to 19 flights a day and about 200 team members at MIA when American purchased routes belonging to Eastern Airlines. But more importantly, MIA became a major hub for American and its primary gateway to Latin America and the Caribbean. And American has been committed to the region ever since. I've seen the company persevere through ups and downs, and I always stuck with them because they stuck with me.

Flash forward to today, we've grown to more than 350 daily flights to more than 127 destinations across three continents. It's been incredible to witness the evolution of American's economic impact in South Florida. Last year alone, our 13,500 team members cared for nearly 30 million customers who were traveling to, through and from

MIA. The growth of the airport itself has been impressive, too. I've seen decades of construction to make way for more customers, airlines and flights.

For the last 15 years, I've been privileged to have the title of Crew Chief, leading a terrific group of automotive mechanics. Together we maintain more than 3,000 pieces of ground service equipment behind the scenes to move 1 million pounds of cargo and 80,000 bags around the airport each day.

I hope the time I've spent here at MIA has in some way paved a path for the next generation and left a positive legacy at American. My message to those who follow is that you can never stop dreaming. American hasn't stopped dreaming in Miami, and as we celebrate 30 years as a hub, I can only think that the best is yet to come. On behalf of American and my more than 130,000 colleagues, thanks for flying with us today.

Tony Gomez
Automotive Mechanic Crew Chief
Ground Service Equipment
Miami