



NEWS RELEASE

# American Airlines and OBAP celebrate 50 years of progress and 100 years of flight

2026-01-07

Historic partnership, with American Airlines as Title Sponsor of OBAP's 50th Annual Conference, honors legacy and builds a runway for an inclusive future in aviation

CHICAGO and FORT WORTH, Texas — The Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals (OBAP) and American Airlines proudly announce their partnership for OBAP's 50th anniversary celebration. As the event's official Title Sponsor, American Airlines joins OBAP in honoring five decades of advancing awareness, access and opportunities for careers in aviation for those who otherwise may not have known it was possible. This partnership is especially significant as American Airlines celebrates its centennial year in 2026, marking 100 years of connecting people and places around the world.

"American Airlines is proud to sponsor OBAP's 50th anniversary celebration — and to partner every day — as we have a shared mission of creating pathways for future generations to thrive in aviation," said David Seymour, American's Chief Operating Officer. "As we celebrate our centennial year and look Forever ForwardSM, we recognize that progress happens when we invest in people and partnerships that strengthen our industry. This milestone is not just about honoring history — it's about building a future where talent and opportunity soar together."

The collaboration reflects a shared history rooted in breaking barriers. In 1964, American Airlines made history when it hired Captain David E. Harris, the first Black commercial airline pilot. Ten years later, Harris joined fellow pioneers to establish OBAP, then known as the Organization of Black Airline Pilots, creating a network dedicated to opening doors for underrepresented communities in aerospace. That vision continues to inspire progress across the industry today.

"Captain David Harris' groundbreaking achievement in 1964 forever changed the face of aviation and ignited a legacy of progress that still shapes our industry today," said OBAP Board Chair Tennessee Garvey. "This partnership with American Airlines is more than a celebration of where we've been — it is a promise to accelerate where we are going. Together, we are working to ensure that opportunity reaches every corner of aerospace, and that the next 50 years are defined by access, equity and boundless possibility."

The partnership officially kicks off Jan. 13 at the Hilton Chicago O'Hare Airport, the site of OBAP's first meeting, with an intimate gathering of founders, industry leaders and special guests. The celebration will culminate at OBAP's 50th anniversary conference to be held Aug. 12-14 in Chicago, featuring a documentary premiere, Hall of Fame induction, awards gala, youth engagement programs, career development workshops and networking events for pilots, engineers, technicians and industry partners.

As American Airlines celebrates 100 years of flight and OBAP marks 50 years of impact, this partnership stands as a powerful testament to progress and a promise to keep pushing forward.

#### About American Airlines Group (NASDAQ: AAL)

American Airlines is a premium global airline connecting more of the U.S. to the world. With roots tracing back to an air mail carrier in the Midwestern United States in 1926, American now operates more than 6,000 daily flights to more than 350 destinations in more than 60 countries and serves more than 200 million customers annually. Powered by a proud and talented team of 130,000 aviation professionals, American's team lives out the airline's purpose of caring for people on life's journey every day.

The world's largest airline proudly celebrates its centennial year in 2026, reaching a milestone that reflects a century of innovation and the **Forever ForwardSM** spirit that changed the industry and the world. American introduced the first scheduled air cargo service, the first airport lounge and the first airline loyalty program and continues to reinvent the customer experience today. The airline is also a founding member of the oneworld alliance, whose members serve more than 900 destinations around the globe.

Get the latest about American at [news.aa.com](http://news.aa.com) and [@AmericanAir](https://twitter.com/AmericanAir).

#### About the Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals (OBAP)

Founded in 1976, the Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals is a nonprofit organization dedicated to inspiring excellence and providing opportunities in aerospace through exposure, education, and mentorship. OBAP reaches more than 20,000 students annually through its youth programs and provides career development, training, and advocacy for aerospace professionals worldwide.