

# RIC INSIDER



 RICHMOND  
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

February 19, 2024 ♦ The internal newsletter created by and intended for members of Team RIC. ♦ 37.507978, -77.331394

## A Message from Sam Burton, American Airlines General Manager - RIC

In today's aviation environment there are multiple layers of processes, programs, and complex equipment to facilitate the safe, secure, and efficient travel of our customers to and from their destinations. The constantly developing nature of our business and the challenges each day brings solidify the fact, as a Team, we can accomplish great things and overcome any obstacle. The RIC airport family, every employee, no matter their role or company, is essential to our continuing mutual success. Thank you for sharing your time and talents with us.

## A Very Special Guest Arrives at RIC!

Emmet Brickowski, the beloved LEGO minifigure, has begun temporary residency at our airport! Emmet's presence is due to LEGO's recent business venture in our community; the company is currently building a new, state-of-the-art, production factory in nearby Chesterfield County, the first of its kind in the United States.

Brickowski will be on display until late April. Stop by the atrium and give him a warm, RVA welcome!

### EMMET TRIVIA

How many LEGO bricks did it take to build our model of Emmet?

- A. 4,466
- B. 5,682
- C. 4,723

In what movie did Emmet make his first appearance?

- A. The LEGO Movie 2
- B. The LEGO Batman Movie
- C. The LEGO Movie

Which actor provided the voice of Emmet?

- A. Chris Hemsworth
- B. Chris Pratt
- C. Chris Evans



Answers at the bottom of page 2

## RIC Customs Facility Nears Completion

Senator Tim Kaine recently visited RIC to tour our new customs facility which will be capable of handling international arrivals. See the links below for more information regarding Sen. Kaine's visit and this significant upgrade to our airport:

[Richmond Times-Dispatch Article](#)

[WTVR CBS 6 Article](#)

[WTVR CBS 6 YouTube](#)

2023 Finals



4.8 million



206.6 million lbs.



104,952

## The USO Celebrates Their 83<sup>rd</sup> National Anniversary



FOR THE PEOPLE WHO SERVE.™

The United Service Organizations (USO) was founded on February 4, 1941, by a congressional charter. Their mission, “to strengthen the well-being of the people serving in America’s military and their families,” string rings true after 83 years. The USO has a prominent location inside Richmond International Airport (RIC), which opened on July 10, 2010.

The RIC USO location was installed with the expectation of serving 1,000 service members and families per month; the location quickly surpassed that number and was seeing over 3,000 individuals per month prior to 2020. In 2023, the RIC USO served an impressive 32,354 troops and families. While visiting the center, military visitors can relax, charge their phones, have a snack, and play games from 8 a.m.-8 p.m. 365 days a year. The USO has an amazing team that supports families through planeside funeral honors if they have lost a service member. The Richmond USO Dignified Transfer team stands ready day or night to escort families during difficult times.

In addition to the center, the USO offers support to local bases including Fort Gregg-Adams, Fort Barfoot, Cheatam Annex, and beyond. The USO is a non-profit 501(c)(3) that is not government funded and relies on volunteers and community support to stay operational. Volunteers and donations are always accepted and appreciated; please contact [triggs@uso.org](mailto:triggs@uso.org) for more information.

### People



**Tara Leal** is celebrating her 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary as an associate with American Airlines! Tara’s career in commercial aviation began on February 21, 1989. We sat down with her to discuss her career and experience at RIC:

#### How did you get involved in the aviation industry?

“My entire life, I always imagined it would be an interesting career path. Initially, I wanted to be a flight attendant; I thought it would be fun to travel on a regular basis. When I lived in Indianapolis, I saw an ad in the newspaper for a job in reservations. I applied, got the job, and worked there until 1992. From there, I transferred to Washington D.C.”

#### How long have you been with RIC? What are the biggest changes you’ve seen at the airport during your tenure?

“I’ve been at RIC for 8 years. The biggest change I’ve seen is the drop in flights due to COVID and the recent, impressive rebound. All the brand-new gates and the new airlines are also big changes for RIC.”

#### What is the most rewarding part of your job?

“Getting the passengers where they need to be safely and seeing how excited they are to travel. Even after all these years, I still love coming to work!”



If you have content for future editions of *RIC Insider*, please email [ahaynes@flyrichmond.com](mailto:ahaynes@flyrichmond.com)

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