



LAKE TAHOE airport

City of South Lake Tahoe, California

HISTORY OF LAKE TAHOE'S AIRPORTS

Tahoe Sky Harbor Airport & Resort (Stateline, Douglas County, Nevada)

During the late 1940s, Burke Creek was relocated & the western portion of the meadow filled to develop the first airport in the Tahoe Basin. The meadow area which is now West of Kahle Drive in Stateline, Nevada was used by Sky Harbor Airport & Casino; which flew its wealthy patrons in from San Francisco to spend money in the local casinos that were clustered around the California/Nevada state line. The airport consisted of a dirt landing strip and "gaming" airport terminal where pilots could test their luck. The Sky Harbor Airport was poorly engineered and its only runway was on too steep of an incline to meet aerodrome standards of the day. Unfortunately, the airport was short lived; closing in 1950. The Lake Tahoe Basin would be without an airfield until 1958.

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Tahoe Valley Airport/Lake Tahoe Airport (South Lake Tahoe, El Dorado, County, California)

El Dorado County purchased airport land from George and Minnie Kyburz in 1957 for the construction of a new airport. The Kyburz family had used the Upper Truckee River and adjacent meadowland for cattle and sheep ranching prior to improvements as an airport. The Tahoe Valley Airport; as it was initially called, was to be the highest commercial service airport in California.



The County broke ground for the airport in 1958. The airport opened on August 1, 1959 with a 5900' runway and was the only airport along 750 miles of the High Sierras capable of supporting private aircraft, military aircraft and scheduled air carriers. Lt Governor Glen Anderson dedicated the airport

and celebrity Dennis Day was master of ceremonies. Two hundred airplanes flew in for the ceremony. The 1st airline flight was flown from the airport during the dedication. Kilfoyle Air Travel Service (KA TS) airlines flew a Martin 404 carrying 42 passengers on an hour long flight that returned to the new airport after a tour of Lake Tahoe by air. The 1st shipment of air freight into Lake Tahoe Airport also came during the opening ceremonies when



the Wells Products company of San Leandro flew in an emergency order of 10,000 rivets for new slot machines at Harrah's Casino, Stateline, Nevada.

In 1959, Tahoe Air Lines, Inc. (TALI) introduced flights out of the airport in a 4 engine amphibian McKinnon Goose later in August. Air ambulances services started flying out of the airport in September 1959 and continue to provide lifesaving services to the South Shore to this day. In 1960, representatives of the US Forest Service and California Department of Forestry discussed plans to locate an aerial firefighting task force at the airport. State and federal officials later announced the airport is ideally located for fighting fires. The Lake Tahoe Airport was extensively used to fly in Olympians and Vice President Nixon during the 1960 Winter Olympic Games in Squaw Valley.

Golden Gate Airways initiated air carrier service between Lake Tahoe Airport and San Francisco



International Airport in April 1960 with a twin Beechcraft carrying 6 passengers. Harper Aviation initiated service between San Carlos and Lake Tahoe with a Twin Beechcraft in May 1960. Silver Dollar Airlines announced service to Lake Tahoe in June 1960 with a twin-engine Aero Commander. Trans-Sierra Airways inaugurated service between Lake Tahoe Airport

and San Francisco in June 1960.



A 70 passenger DC-4 from Pacific Southwest Airlines landed at Lake Tahoe Airport in July 1960 marking the 1st time an aircraft of this size landed at the airport. A Trans World Airways (TWA) constellation arrived at Lake Tahoe Airport from Oakland in July 1960 carrying 56 passengers for a golf tournament at Glenbrook golf course. TWA announced plans to fly charter service to Lake Tahoe Airport with a Constellation carrying 80 passengers in December 1960. TWA asked for the runway length to be increased to operate the aircraft. In late 1962,

Runway 18/36 at the Lake Tahoe Airport was lengthened to a length of 8,544 feet. Several other new airlines inaugurated service to Lake Tahoe Airport including Paradise Airlines, Futura Airlines, California Air and Commodore Air Service.

The Jet Age arrived at Lake Tahoe with the arrival of a Boeing 707 from Pan-American Airways in January 1963. August 1963 saw peak airline operations with over 132 commercial flights per week. In 1966 Pacific Air Lines started operating the first jet service into Lake Tahoe with Boeing 727-100s flying a Los Angeles (LAX)-San Jose-Lake Tahoe round trip schedule. A 1966 Pacific Air Lines route map also depicted nonstop 727 service to San Francisco (SFO) and Reno from the Lake Tahoe Airport.

This 727 service lasted less than a year, and Tahoe did not see scheduled jet flights again until 1983. Following cessation of the Pacific 727 service, a ban on scheduled passenger airline jet operations at the airport was initiated by El Dorado County. Pacific Air Lines resumed Fairchild F-27 service and successors Air West and Hughes Air West also operated Fairchild F-27 turboprop flights until the early 1970s. The Lockheed L-188 Electra propjet was flown by several airlines into the airport and was ideally suited to the high altitude environment.

On March 1, 1964, 85 people were killed in Lake Tahoe's worst plane crash, Paradise Airlines Flight 901A started its flight in Oakland, Calif., preparing for an arrival at the Lake Tahoe Airport. The aircraft never made it to the airport, rather flying into terrain approximately 1 mile south of Genoa Peak. The Civil Aeronautics Board determined that the probable cause of the accident was the pilot's deviation from prescribed flight procedures while attempting a visual landing in unfavorable weather. The decision had led to "geographical disorientation" and an abandoned landing attempt at the Lake Tahoe Airport, according to the accident report.



Maintenance records for the Lockheed Constellation also revealed multiple reports of malfunctions in the fluxgate compass system and discrepancies reported in both altimeters prior to the day of the crash. Maintenance was performed on those instruments the night before the incident, but according to the accident report, the possibility of mechanical error still existed at the time of the crash.



The accident spurred the construction of the airport's air traffic control tower which opened in 1968. The current airport terminal building opened in 1969 as passenger numbers steadily increased averaging 120,000 passengers per year throughout the early 1970s. The peak number of passengers occurred in 1978 when over 294,000 enplanements were realized. However, with airline deregulation in 1978, a series of airline bankruptcies and environmental activism would end commercial airline service to South Lake Tahoe a few decades later. During the 1980's the average number of passenger enplanements were around 72,000 per year as fewer and fewer airlines serviced the Tahoe market.



Lake Tahoe Airport experienced significant growth in passengers throughout the 1970s and was served by many airlines that once served the West Coast.

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AIRLINES

In 1983 the City of South Lake Tahoe purchased the airport from El Dorado County for the purchase price of \$1. After City ownership, the ban on commercial jet aircraft ended, and jet service resumed in 1983 with AirCal operating McDonnell Douglas MD-80s and later Boeing 737-300s. AirCal flew nonstop to Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Jose, CA and direct to Burbank and Orange County. In 1987, a daily AirCal 737-300 flight was scheduled direct to Chicago O'Hare Airport via San Francisco and Orange County. American Airlines acquired AirCal in 1987 and continued to serve Lake Tahoe with the former AirCal 737-300s. Concerns regarding noise impacts of aircraft operations at the Lake Tahoe Airport during the 1980's resulted in a legal settlement agreement in 1992 that established strict noise and access restrictions at the airport. After 1992, passenger enplanements dropped by more by 70% as airlines cut schedules and downsized aircraft serving Lake Tahoe. The average number of passenger enplanements fell to 19,000 per year after the settlement agreement went into effect. The City of South Lake Tahoe General Fund begins to



subsidize the airport's operating budget in the face of declining airline revenues.

American Airlines switched to regional partner American Eagle with Saab 340 and Fairchild Swearingen Metroliner turboprops in the 1990s to meet new noise restrictions. American was the only major U.S. airline ever to serve Lake Tahoe. At one point Reno Air flew McDonnell Douglas MD-80s nonstop to Los

Angeles; other jets included British Aircraft Corporation BAC One-Elevens operating nonscheduled casino charters.

In 1999, Casino Express Airlines operating as Tahoe Air started low fare Boeing 737-200 jet service nonstop to San Jose and Los Angeles (LAX). Allegiant Air also inaugurated McDonnell Douglas DC-9 nonstop service to Burbank, Fresno, Las Vegas and Long Beach in 1999.

However, the South Lake Tahoe market could not support jet service by this time. Tahoe Air experienced financial difficulties and ceased all operations later in 1999 while Allegiant discontinued all service in 2000. The departure of Allegiant Airlines ended scheduled commercial air service to the Tahoe Basin. As air service decreased, less funding was available for airport maintenance and the airport's infrastructure deteriorated as a



result. The air traffic control tower closed in October 2004 due to a lack of Federal funding. Annual flight operations (takeoff or landing) decreased from approximately 40,000 in 1991 to 10,479 in 2001 at its lowest. Airport staffing was reduced from 7 permanent employees in 2000 to 2 full time employees



the airport has today. In 2018 the airport estimates approximately 24,000 aircraft operations with a trend line indicating continued growth as the City invests in redeveloping existing capital infrastructure to attract aviation to the South Shore.

In 2001, the National Air Transportation Association listed Lake Tahoe Airport as "America's 100 Most Needed Airports". The airport became the City of South Lake Tahoe's City

Administrative Services Office/City Hall starting in 2006 by utilizing space that served commercial airlines ticketing, baggage claim and hold rooms. Completion of the City's remodel modifications ended in early 2017.



The City continued to try to attract commercial air service through 2015 when the airport formally surrendered its commercial airline operating certificate to the Federal Aviation Administration. The airport now supports the military and general aviation.

During the week of June 24, 2007 twenty seven fire- fighting aircraft operated from the airport during the Angora Fire saving property and possibly lives. A joint Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was operated in the Airport Terminal Building. In

September 2007, five agricultural aircraft flew 6,300 aerial hydromulch flight operations from the airport to stabilize soil in the Angora Fire site.

In 2008, Runway 18/36 was completely reconstructed with three inches of asphalt at a cost of over \$6 million of which 95% was paid for through Caltrans and Federal Aviation Administration grants. During this project the runway was narrowed by 50 feet giving back to the environment 205,000 square feet of Stream Environment Zone.

In 2015, the Lake Tahoe Airport was awarded a U.S. Government Fuel Services Contract from the Defense Logistics Agency. In 2020, the Lake Tahoe Airport was the first department within the City of South Lake Tahoe to enact City Council's Climate Reality's 100% Committed pledge to reduce the City's carbon footprint by 80% by 2040 through a 300.6 kW rooftop solar installation. The Private Public Partnership with Staten Solar, Inc. and Liberty Utilities realized a 95% reduction in airport facility greenhouse gas emissions from traditional energy utility inputs at the airport.



The airport is home to ten private sector businesses supporting 37 full time private sector jobs. According to a 2020 Airport Economic Impact Study completed by the University of Nevada Center for Economic Development, the Lake Tahoe Airport had a \$25.9 million total economic impact to the bistate economy of the South Shore. The airport's revenues have continued to grow even during the COVID-19 pandemic. General aviation jet traffic has increased 213% from 2011-2021. The Lake Tahoe Airport also serves as a summer base for U.S. Forest Service

contract aerial fire-fighting assets and supports numerous military training missions for both the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps. The airport also serves El Dorado County Sheriff Aviation Unit, Reach Air Medical Ambulance, CAL-FIRE Aviation Program, State of California Office of Air Operations, Nevada Wing of the Civil Air Patrol, El Dorado County Search and Rescue, and the Nevada Air National Guard. The airport is also the City of South Lake Tahoe’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC), and a secondary public shelter location in the event the City must evacuate. The airport is prioritizing climate resiliency efforts through active forest management. The airport has also served as a filming location for television and motion pictures. In 2019 the airport served as a location for Top Gun: Maverick, a \$104 million Paramount Motion Picture, in 2020 the airport served as a filming location for Keeping Up with the Kardashians and in 2021 was the location for a new Cirrus Vision Jet commercial.

Lake Tahoe Airport Historical Timeline (1959 to Present)

1959	➤	Lake Tahoe Airport officially opens
Early 1960s to mid 1970s	➤	Holiday Airlines and Hughes Air West provide majority of scheduled air service
1974	➤	Hughes Air West stops air service to Lake Tahoe Airport
1975	➤	Holiday Airlines stops air service to Lake Tahoe Airport
1975	➤	Air California (AirCal) and Pacific Southwest Airlines (PSA) begin scheduled air service to Lake Tahoe Airport
1978	➤	Passenger enplanements reach an all-time high of 294,188 passengers, up from 39,433 passengers in 1974
1979	➤	California Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (CTRPA) contested PSA’s and AirCal’s request to use jet aircraft to serve Lake Tahoe Airport
1979	➤	As a result of CTRPA’s contention to using jet aircraft, and other factors, PSA and AirCal terminate scheduled air service to Lake Tahoe Airport
1979	➤	Passenger enplanements drop by 45% to 169,683 as a result of PSA and AirCal terminating service
1980	➤	Passenger enplanements drop another 58% to 68,729 passengers
1979 to 1982	➤	Aspen Airways provides scheduled air service Lake Tahoe Airport
1981 to 1982	➤	Golden West Airlines provides scheduled air service to Lake Tahoe Airport
1982 to 1986	➤	Pacific Coast Airlines provides commuter air service to Lake Tahoe Airport
1982	➤	Passenger enplanements reach an all-time low of 37,553 passengers

1983	➤	AirCal reinstates scheduled air service to Lake Tahoe using jet aircraft
1984	➤	Passenger enplanements increase to 91,422 passengers
1986		Wings West/American Eagle commenced scheduled air service to Lake Tahoe Airport
1987	➤	AirCal becomes part of American Airlines
1991	➤	American Airlines terminates air service to Lake Tahoe Airport in anticipation of the approval of the Master Plan Settlement Agreement; American Eagle continues
1992	➤	Conclude Airport Master Plan Settlement Agreement (MPSA) between TRPA, City and State Attorney General. Strict noise and airline access controls.
1992	➤	The Lake Tahoe Airport Commercial Airline Access Plan is adopted by the FAA
1992 & 1993	➤	United Express and Alpha Air commence service to Lake Tahoe Airport. .
1994	➤	In an effort to re-establish scheduled jet service at Lake Tahoe Airport, the Tahoe Airline Guarantee Corporation (TAG) agrees to provide a direct subsidy to Reno Air; American Eagle and United Express terminate commuter service.
1994	➤	Reno Air begins subsidized scheduled air service to Lake Tahoe Airport
1995	➤	TAG ceases subsidy; Reno Air terminates scheduled air service; Alpha Air/Trans World Express ceases operations; Sierra Expressway commences scheduled commuter service
1996	➤	Sierra Expressway ceases operations
1997 to 1998		There is no scheduled air service to Lake Tahoe Airport
1999	➤	Allegiant Air and Tahoe Air begin scheduled air service to Lake Tahoe and enplane 11,950 passengers
2000	➤	Allegiant Air re-establishes scheduled jet service to Lake Tahoe; ceases 11/2000
2001	➤	Scheduled Commercial Airline Service to South Lake Tahoe ends
2004	➤	Air Traffic Control Tower closes due to lack of Federal Funding and a lower number of aircraft operations.
2005	➤	Lake Tahoe Airport initiates annual Lake in the Sky Airshow
2007	➤	Airport supports critical fire response efforts during the Angora Fire and also aids in aerial soil stabilization efforts during fire recovery. Mountain West Aviation becomes the airport's Fixed Based Operator.

2008	➤	Reconstruction of Runway 18/36. Airport hosts City of South Lake Tahoe Fire Festival
2012	➤	1992 Airport Master Plan Settlement Agreement (MPSA) expires
2013	➤	Commence First Master Plan Update since 1993 Airport Master Plan Settlement Agreement
2015	➤	City Council formally surrenders the Airport’s F.A.R. Part 139 Commercial Airline Operating Certificate to the Federal Aviation Administration. The Airport is designated a Regional General Aviation Airport. Final year for Lake in the Sky Air Show after declining participation and mounting costs to host the show. Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting Station 4 decommissioned after airport becomes a general aviation facility.
2016	➤	Airport is able to service U.S. Government Aircraft under a fuel concession with the Defense Logistics Agency.
2017	➤	City Council formally adopts Airport Master Plan Update 2015-2035 and initiates Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan Update. Airport suspends aircraft noise monitoring program after the conclusion of the MPSA.
2018	➤	Lake Tahoe Airport is first department in the City to implement 100% Climate Committed Pledge by installing 300.6 kWh Rooftop Solar Power Installation.
2019	➤	Film location for Top Gun: Maverick and the completion of General Aviation Ramp Reconstruction efforts in several locations. Started construction on rooftop airport solar farm providing carbon free power to airport facilities through a P3 partnership with Liberty Utilities, Staten Solar, Inc. and the City of South Lake Tahoe. Completed retrofit of all ballast and incandescent airport facility lighting with LED to reduce power consumption. Initiated the airport recycling program. Airport showcased during California Storm Water Awareness Week.
2020	➤	Responded to the COVID-19 Pandemic as a PPE storage and distribution site and community public health testing center location. Airport remained open maintaining continuity of operations for the general aviation community. The number of aircraft operations increased 10% during the pandemic bucking national trends.
2021	➤	Completed the reconstruction of the entire airport general aviation ramp and fuel farm service road without incident in a sensitive environment.

HISTORIC PHOTOS PROVIDED BY DEPARTEDWINGS.COM



June 1971: Holiday Airlines was formed specifically to provide passenger flights into Lake Tahoe Airport. The airline started was a local taxi operator before purchasing three Lockheed Electra turboprops to provide convenient "holiday" service into the mountain resort of Lake Tahoe. Scheduled services started in November 1968 between Lake Tahoe and San Jose, Oakland, and Hollywood-Burbank, advertising the "Fastest Fun in the West" using the Super Electra "Jets". By the early 1970s, services had expanded to include flights from San Diego and Los Angeles. Although Holiday Airlines was providing a unique service with minimal competition (Hughes Airwest was the major competitor in the market), the airline suffered financial difficulties and eventually filed for bankruptcy in February 1975. Parked on the ramp and loading up passengers for another flight is N971HA, a Lockheed L-188-C Electra, originally delivered to Pacific Southwest Airlines (PSA) in November 1959.



May 1975: One of the highest "airline" capable airports in the United States, Lake Tahoe's main passenger terminal building still holds that alpine charm as evidence from the A-framed construction and welcoming sign.



May 1975: During the 1970s many of the casinos located in Stateline, Nevada (just east of South Lake Tahoe) chartered various aircraft on tour packages to their hotels. One of the first Casinos to do this was the Sahara Tahoe Hotel which used charter company Starflight to fly British Aerospace BAC-1-11 flight from various western locations into Lake Tahoe. In 1973, the new Harrah's Casino and Hotel opened in Stateline, and the company sub-leased the BAC-1-11 and started its own gambling "junket" flights. These flights were quite popular and helped build the reputation of the mountain resort. One of the various hazards with operating flights into Lake Tahoe was extreme weather and on February 9, 1975, this aircraft operating a gambling charter flight to Denver struck a snow bank on takeoff and ran off the runway. The right wing and nose gear were torn off and the plane was declared a write off. Fortunately no injuries were reported. Seen parked on the ramp and awaiting final disposition is N711ST, a British Aerospace BAC-1-11-401AK, originally delivered to American Airlines in February 1966. Note the "Harrah's" Casino logo still on tail.



June 1975: Detroit, Michigan based private travel club "The Nomads" was formed in 1965, as an alternative to the high cost of general commercial air travel. Nomads was a member based organization and a variety of flights were flown catered to general interest, winter "snow-bird" routes or later, the famed 28-day, multi-stop "World Tour." The first "Flying Clubhouse" aircraft to be used by Nomads was a Douglas DC-7 followed by a 92-passenger Lockheed Electra in 1971. The venerable Electra could be seen around the country and within Mexico at a wide range of destinations and was the first aircraft to fly the "World Tour." Lake Tahoe became an occasional summer club destination with it's beautiful weather and lucrative casinos. Nomads eventually acquired a Boeing 727 and was a popular travel alternative to southern Michigan based members until its demise in 2011. Parked at the terminal ramp during a club planned trip is N836E, a Lockheed L-188-C Electra delivered to Nomads in April 1971, but originally delivered to QANTAS in December 1959, as VH-ECD.



July 1975: Air California revived scheduled passenger services into South Lake Tahoe Airport in February 1975 hoping to tap into the winter and summer vacation demands. Because of the city's ban on continuous jet aircraft operations, Air California found use for the near obsolete Lockheed Electra's and quickly placed them on the Tahoe service. New service between Lake Tahoe and Oakland, San Francisco, San Jose and Orange County were started with daily flights in each market. Rolling out on Runway 36 after an afternoon flight is N124AC, a Lockheed L-188-A Electra, originally delivered to Braniff Airlines as N9709C in January 1960.



August 1975: McCulloch International Airlines was established when McCulloch Oil Company purchased the assets of air-taxi operator Vance International Airways in 1970. The new company, based from Long Beach, California used the Electra Turboprops to fly prospective land buyers to McCulloch properties in Lake Havasu City, Arizona (other properties as well including Pueblo West in Colorado and Fountain Hills in Arizona). On occasion the planes were flown up to Lake Tahoe as a weekend "getaway" for their customers and as a incentive for land purchase. Taxiing inbound to the terminal after having landed is N6118A, a Lockheed L-188 Electra A, purchased from American Airlines in May 1968.



October 1975: Not to be outdone by intrastate competitor Air California, Pacific Southwest Airlines (PSA) applied for and received approval to add Lake Tahoe to its route map in 1975. Due to the ban on regular jet aircraft flights, PSA re-introduced the Lockheed Electra on flights to the alpine destination. With an initial fleet of two Electra's, PSA started non-stop service between Los Angeles and Lake Tahoe in April 1975, with a round trip fare of \$30.00. At the time PSA was the only airline to provide regular passenger schedules between LAX and Tahoe and the flights quickly became popular with passengers seeking the summer time activities in the Sierras. Parked on the ramp and being serviced for its next departure is N171PS, a Lockheed L-188 Electra-C and originally delivered to PSA in November 1959, disposed of in 1963, and reacquired in August 1975, for Tahoe service.



November 1975: Although Lake Tahoe Airport was specific to flights of both commercial and private aircraft, the airport was also host to the occasional military training flight. Numerous military facilities were located within one hundred miles of Lake Tahoe and the airport served as a viable "training" airport for various US Navy, US Air Force and US Coast Guard aircraft. One visitor to the mountain airport was the Lockheed P-3 Orion Anti-Submarine aircraft belonging to US Navy patrol squadron VP-19 "Big Red" based at Naval Air Station Moffett Field located at the south end of San Francisco Bay. Rolling out on Runway 36 during a training sortie is US Navy 159512, a Lockheed P-3C Orion.



September 1976: One of the operators of a modified airliner used for corporate jet purposes was Barron Hilton's Hilton Hotels British Aerospace BAC-1-11 plane. The aircraft was used to transport Barron Hilton, Conrad Hilton and other of the hotel chain executives to various meetings, hotel openings and personal business throughout North America. Parked on the ramp during a visit to Lake Tahoe is N5019, a British Aerospace BAC-1-11-401AK, originally delivered to American Airlines in February 1966, and purchased by Hilton in January 1976.



May 1977: By 1977, Pacific Southwest Airlines (PSA) had added non-stop service from both Hollywood-Burbank and San Francisco airport to South Lake Tahoe. Continuing to use the Electra's on the demanding high-elevation services, PSA flew no less than nine daily flights into the mountain based airport. Seen rolling out on Runway 18 is N171PS, a Lockheed L-188 Electra-C turboprop.



November 1978: Air California continued to be the major carrier flying into Lake Tahoe during the late 1970s. The airline had five daily flights, with services to five California cities using its fleet of three Electra Turboprops. The promotion of Lake Tahoe service year round by the airline kept seats filled and the mountain resort continued to be a popular destination for Californians. Wearing an updated color scheme and parked on the ramp being serviced for another flight is N124AC, a Lockheed L-188-A Electra.



February 1981: Orange County based Golden West Airlines started service into Lake Tahoe in early 1981, after the delivery of their new de Havilland Canada DHC-7 "Dash 7" airplanes. The four-engined Short-Takeoff-Or-Landing (STOL) turboprops made the mountain based services quicker and safer. Golden West would initially provide year-round services from Lake Tahoe to Orange County, Ontario, Fresno, San Jose, Oakland, and San Francisco. Parked on the ramp during a cold winter afternoon is N703GW, a de Havilland Canada DHC-7-102, delivered new to Golden West Airlines just a month earlier in January 1981.



February 1981: After airline deregulation in 1978, Denver-based Aspen Airways sought new services in the west and being familiar with mountainous flying, focused on new services to Lake Tahoe. Flights started in November 1978, from San Francisco, San Jose, and Burbank to Lake Tahoe. The powerful Convair 580 turboprops handled the high-altitude flights with ease and continued the popularity of the services into the Lake Tahoe Airport. Parked on the ramp in front of the alpine design terminal building is N5808, a Convair 580, and originally converted to Allison Turboprop by Allegheny Airlines in 1968.



August 1995: Reno, Nevada based Reno Air started flying on July 1, 1992, from a home base at Reno to points within the western U.S. The new regional focused airline quickly expanded and by 1994 was flying to fourteen cities using a fleet of McDonnell Douglas MD-80 airplanes. One of the more unique destinations Reno Air added to its route map was starting service to South Lake Tahoe, California in December 1994. Non-stop flights to Los Angeles were started, and for the first time since 1991, brought jet service back to the popular resort destination. The airline used its "hotrod" MD-87 planes on the once-daily service into the mountainous airport. Although load factors were reasonable, Reno Air stopped flights into the airport on September 6, 1995, after only nine months of service. Rolling out on Runway 18 at South Lake Tahoe airport after a typical summer rainstorm is N750RA, a McDonnell Douglas MD-87, originally delivered to Midway Airlines in September 1989, and subsequently leased by Reno Air in November 1994.



October 1999: Tahoe Air was a startup airline that was formed to reintroduce airline service into South Lake Tahoe after the departure of Reno Air in 1995. Using a leased Boeing 737 from Casino Express Airlines, Tahoe Air started service between Lake Tahoe and Los Angeles on June 25, 1999. San Jose was added a month later and the airline reported good load factors. Within a few months however, with the delay of delivery of the airlines own MD-80 as well as marginal profits, the airline ceased operations in October 1999. Parked on the ramp during an afternoon turn-around is N233TM, a Boeing 737-2-282.