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*Preserving America's Heritage*

## **Floyd Bennett Airfield Energy Project Honored with Chairman's Award**

Washington, DC — A partnership among federal and state agencies and an energy company to rehabilitate and save historic airport hangars as part of an energy regulating station has received the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's (ACHP) Chairman's Award for Achievement in Historic Preservation.

The story unfolded when Williams Companies proposed installing a natural gas meter and regulating (M&R) station in two air hangars in Floyd Bennett Field, located in Gateway National Recreation Area in Brooklyn, New York. Floyd Bennett Field was listed on the National Register in 1981 due to its commercial aviation architecture, which is highly representative of the mid-20th century. The field was opened in 1931, and served as a point of departure for the record-breaking flights of famous aviators such as Amelia Earhart and Howard Hughes. The site was converted to a Naval Air Station in 1941, and it was the most active airport in the United States during World War II.

Williams proposed placing the M&R facility in the hangars as part of its plan to construct a new pipeline delivering natural gas to the New York City power grid. The company provided funding and labor to rehabilitate the hangars, which were in serious disrepair and in danger of collapse. In order to ensure the renovation was historically appropriate, Williams produced a 600-page Historic Structure Report designed to identify the character-defining features of the buildings.

"This rehabilitation project avoided environmentally-costly new construction and is an excellent model for the adaptive reuse of unique historic buildings," said ACHP Chairman Milford Wayne Donaldson FAIA. "The partnership fulfills a number of the objectives we honor through the Chairman's Award, including the rehabilitation and stewardship of historic resources, as well as the public involvement of partners and stakeholders in preserving those resources."

The successful completion of the project required assistance and review from multiple federal and state agencies. The National Park Service (NPS) approved the new use for the hangar, helped develop the standards for renovation and rehabilitation, and ensured the construction process met the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) produced the Environmental Impact Statement for the project and developed a plan that allowed historic preservation agencies to comment on the construction before it began. Initial schematics and full design and construction documents for the project were reviewed by the NPS, the New York State Historic Preservation Office, and FERC.

*About the ACHP:* An independent federal agency, the ACHP promotes the economic, educational, environmental, sustainability, and cultural values of historic preservation and advises the President and Congress on national historic preservation policy. It also influences federal activities, programs, and policies that affect historic and cultural properties. See [www.achp.gov](http://www.achp.gov) for more information.

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