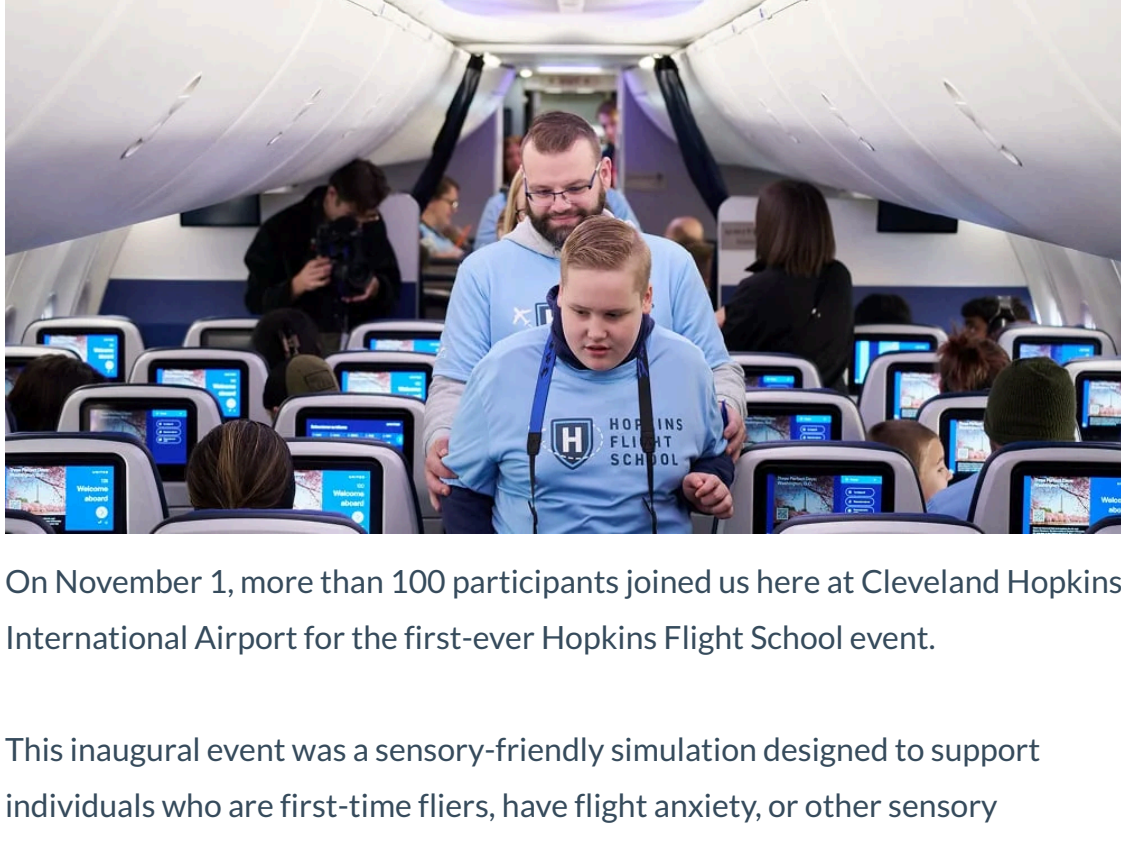




Issue 22 | November 2025

## Our First Hopkins Flight School Took Off... Without Ever Leaving the Gate!



On November 1, more than 100 participants joined us here at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport for the first-ever Hopkins Flight School event.

This inaugural event was a sensory-friendly simulation designed to support individuals who are first-time fliers, have flight anxiety, or other sensory sensitivities build confidence and comfort with air travel.

While the aircraft never left the gate, the experience was anything but stationary.

Dressed in their custom Hopkins Flight School gear, participants seamlessly navigated through the full pre-boarding process with ease. From check-in and TSA screening to boarding, this experience replicated a realistic day of travel, without stress.

Adding to the calming atmosphere were a few of our beloved therapy dogs from our [Hopkins Hounds](#) initiative providing comfort, companionship, and plenty of tail wags.

“

*Flight School was a meaningful step forward in making air travel more accessible and inclusive for all. Watching participants navigate our airport with growing confidence reminds us why experiences like this matter. Through our Hopkins Hospitality initiative, we're proud to lead the way in creating a welcoming and supportive journey for every passenger here at CLE.*

Megan O'Connell  
Assistant Director, Marketing,  
Communications and Guest Experience

The overwhelming success of this event and our ongoing commitment to creating an inclusive airport experience has already sparked plans for future Hopkins Flight School events.

To stay informed about upcoming dates and details, be sure to follow us on social media and visit our website.

We're proud to help more travelers feel confident, supported, and ready for takeoff, whenever they're ready to fly.

Want to see the highlights? Watch our recap video to relive the experience and feel the joy for yourself.

Watch the Recap

## Sponsorship Portfolio Expansion! CLE Enters Partnerships with Kent State Athletics and the Cleveland Cavaliers



It's an exciting time, here, at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport (CLE)! Our airport has just added two exciting additions to its expanding sponsorship portfolio: multi-year partnerships with both the Cleveland Cavaliers and Kent State University Athletics.

"Expanding our partnerships through local universities and sports teams is a powerful way to strengthen our connections throughout Northeast Ohio," said Megan O'Connell, Assistant Director of Marketing, Communications, and Guest Experience. "These collaborations not only expand visibility for CLE, but also deepen our local talent pipeline and help ensure that students, fans, and families continue choosing Cleveland Hopkins International Airport as their airport of choice."

These new sponsorships will not only elevate the airport's visibility but also emphasize a continued strategic investment in the Northeast Ohio community. CLE is the official airport travel partner of Kent State University Athletics. This partnership starts in 2025 and is a 3-year agreement.

This sponsorship includes marketing assets, including in-game promotions, branded materials, a dedicated social media series and more.

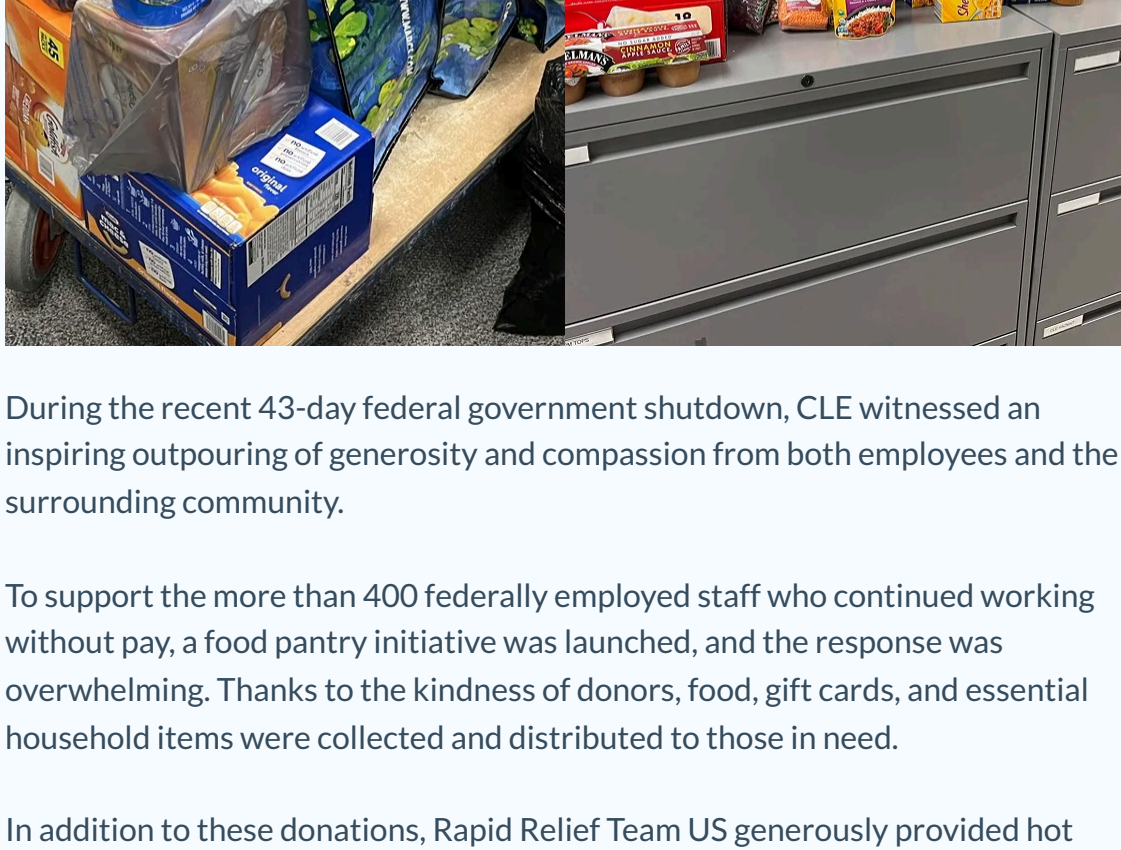
"We're thrilled to welcome Cleveland Hopkins International Airport into the Golden Flashes family," said Kent State's Vice President & Director of Athletics Randle L. Richmond. "This partnership connects two strong Northeast Ohio brands and creates new ways to engage our fans, support our student-athletes, and highlight everything that makes Kent State a national leader in student success."

CLE also signed a 3-year agreement that starts in 2025 as the official partner of the Cleveland Cavaliers.

The partnership with the Cleveland Cavaliers includes dynamic social media content, a multi-level videoboard exposure, exclusive access to the team's beloved service dog, Reggie, a Yellow Labrador and more.

"At the Cleveland Cavaliers, our partnership with Cleveland Hopkins International Airport reflects the collaborative spirit and hometown pride that make Northeast Ohio so special," said Allison Howard, Executive Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer for the Cleveland Cavaliers. "Together, we're connecting students, fans and families while inviting travelers from across the country to experience all that Cleveland has to offer—from its vibrant culture and thriving sports community to the world-class hospitality that welcomes every visitor."

## A Successful Close: CLE Food Pantry Effort Helps Federal Workers



During the recent 43-day federal government shutdown, CLE witnessed an inspiring outpouring of generosity and compassion from both employees and the surrounding community.

To support the more than 400 federally employed staff who continued working without pay, a food pantry initiative was launched, and the response was overwhelming. Thanks to the kindness of donors, food, gift cards, and essential household items were collected and distributed to those in need.

In addition to these donations, Rapid Relief Team US generously provided hot meals to federal workers, offering comfort during a difficult time.

This effort was a true testament to the power of community. Without the support of individuals and organizations who stepped up to help, none of this would have been possible.

CLE is proud to be part of a community that shows up for one another when it matters most. Thank you for making a difference.

## CLE Opens Central Checkpoint Restroom Equipped with First Adult Changing Station

It's an exciting time at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport (CLE)! On November 19, we proudly celebrated the opening of our newest set of restrooms in the Central Checkpoint area with a ribbon cutting ceremony.

This milestone, unlike recent restroom upgrades at CLE, which focused on refreshing existing facilities, involved building entirely new restroom facilities, including a new family restroom. A major highlight of the new family restroom is the inclusion of an adult changing station, which is a first for CLE.

This new changing station was a donation from the Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities (CCBDD), enabling us to support caregivers and travelers with a wide range of mobility needs.

Cleveland City Councilman Brian Kazy was instrumental in linking the airport with CCBDD to ensure that this important addition was realized as part of the Central Checkpoint Expansion Project.

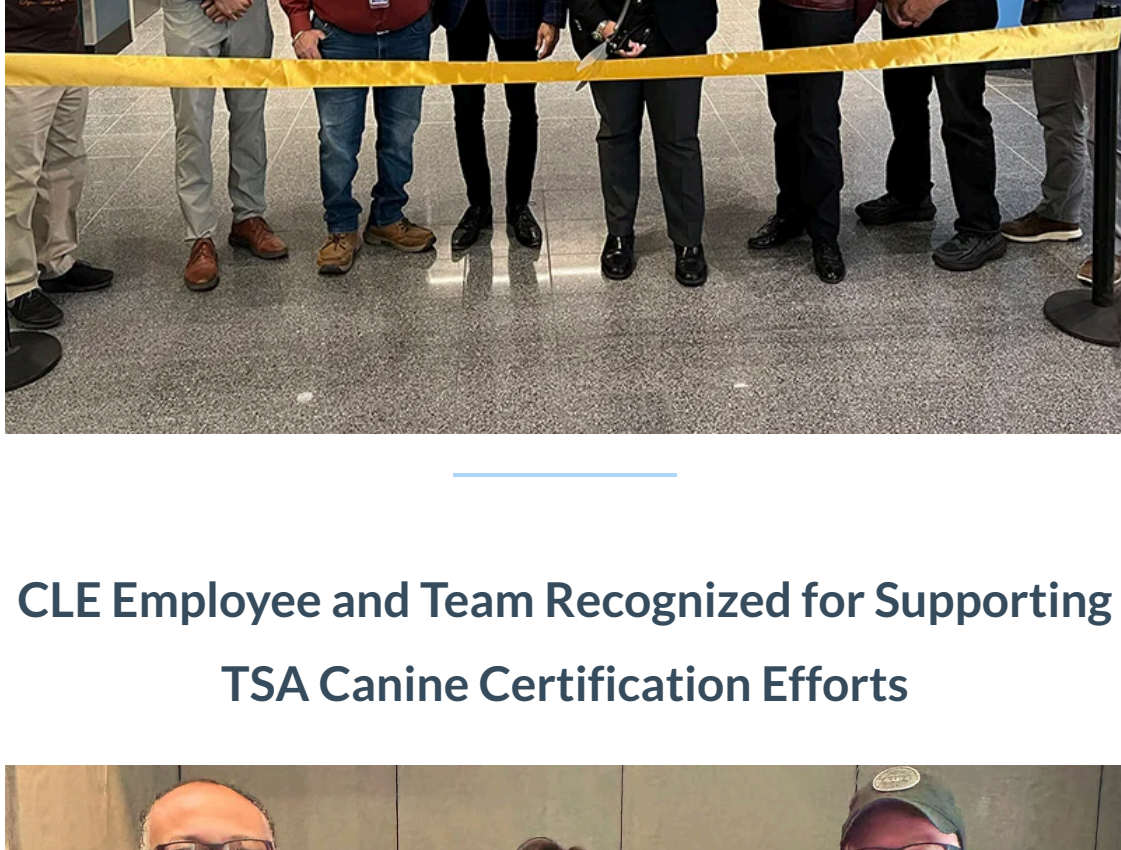
Janet Keeler, Director of Community Employment, said collaborating with the airport speaks to its commitment to accessibility and inclusivity for all.

"This changing table may seem like a small addition but for people who rely on it, it makes a world of difference. It tells them: You matter. Your needs matter. We see you."

This inclusive addition joins several efforts aimed at building a welcoming experience at CLE, including our:

- 🌻 [Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program](#)
- 🐾 [Hopkins Hounds](#)
- ✈️ [Hopkins Flight School](#)

To learn more about our Hopkins Hospitality initiative, [click here](#).



## CLE Employee and Team Recognized for Supporting TSA Canine Certification Efforts



We're proud to share that a few of our airport staff have recently played a key role in supporting the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and the National Explosives Detection Canine Team Program.

Earlier this fall, General Manager of Airport Terminal Operations and Guest Experience Melissa Brkich and her Landside Operation Team helped support K9 certification exercises!

These evaluations are a critical part of ensuring that TSA's Passenger Screening Canine teams are fully prepared to help keep airports across the country safe.

Melissa and her team worked diligently behind the scenes to support the certification process by helping ensure the exercises ran smoothly, while maintaining safe and efficient airport operations throughout.

Cleveland Hopkins International Airport (CLE) is proud to recognize Melissa and her team for their vital role in supporting this important milestone and their commitment to help make CLE a trusted, effective, and welcoming environment.

## Cleveland Hopkins International Airport Earns Airport Carbon Accreditation

Cleveland Hopkins International Airport (CLE) is proud to announce its recent recognition by the Airports Council International Europe's (ACI) Airport Carbon Accreditation (ACA) program. This prestigious program is the only institutionally endorsed global carbon management certification for airports, and CLE has officially achieved *Level 1 – Mapping* status.

This milestone marks a significant step in CLE's long-term commitment to sustainability. By completing a comprehensive carbon footprint report, CLE has laid the groundwork for tracking and reducing its annual carbon emissions. The Level 1 accreditation acknowledges the airport's proactive efforts and supports its goal of achieving Net Zero Emissions for Scope 1 and Scope 2 sources by 2050.

"This achievement reflects our strong commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility," said Bryant L. Francis, C.M., Director of Port Control. "Reaching Airport Carbon Accreditation Level 1 is just the beginning of our journey. We are dedicated to reducing our carbon footprint, improving operational efficiency, and collaborating with our partners to create a more sustainable future for our airport and greater community."

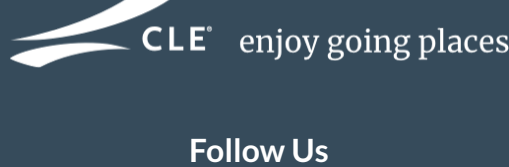
CLE's sustainability efforts are guided by its newly completed Sustainability Management Plan (SMP), which outlines a strategic path forward. The airport is currently implementing its Year 1 Actions, which include:

- Converting existing airport lighting to LED, including indoor facilities, airfield, parking, and CLE-controlled street lighting
- Applying Sustainable Design and Construction Criteria to all Capital Improving Projects in the Terminal Modernization Development Program including high-performance building systems, renewable energy integration and LEED certification.
- Conducting energy audits to identify energy conservation opportunities in existing buildings.

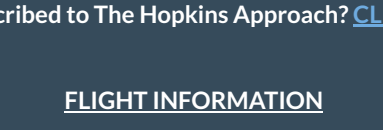
CLE's initiatives align closely with the City of Cleveland's Municipal Action Plan (MAP) and the 2025 Cleveland Climate Action Plan (CAP). These citywide goals include reducing building energy use by 50% by 2030 and fully electrifying 100% of city-owned buildings by 2040. By integrating these broader objectives into its operations, CLE is not only reducing its environmental impact but also reinforcing its role as a responsible and community-focused transportation hub.

To learn more about CLE's environmental initiatives and sustainability goals, [click here](#).

Watch for more stories like these that share information about DPC and our airports. The stories in this issue of *The Hopkins Approach* demonstrate how we are working together to fulfill the Department of Port Control's Mission, Vision, and Values, including our RESPECT Model and Strategic Priorities.



Follow Us



Not subscribed to The Hopkins Approach? [CLICK HERE](#)

FLIGHT INFORMATION  
TRAVELER INFO  
AT THE AIRPORT  
PARKING & TRANSPORTATION