

P R E S S R E L E A S E



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PORT OF SOUTH LOUISIANA TO RESTORE HISTORIC U.S. NAVY BLUE ANGEL

In partnership with the National Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola, Florida, the Port of South Louisiana has acquired the sponsorship rights to the Blue Angel aircraft displayed at the entrance to the Port of South Louisiana’s Executive Regional Airport in Reserve, Louisiana. The aircraft is an original Grumman F-11 Tiger jet fighter that flew with the U.S. Navy flight demonstration team in 1967.

The aircraft will be restored to its original Blue Angels configuration, as it appeared when performed in air shows throughout the United States and other parts of the world, including Europe. “We are very proud of this honor and look forward to completing the restoration of this historic aircraft. Sitting on its pedestal at the entrance to our airport, this authentic Blue Angel has become a landmark within the River Parishes community,” said Port Executive Director Paul Aucoin.

The Port will fund the entire restoration project at a cost of \$27,700.

On October 10, 1967, the aircraft was the victim of a malfunction during a flight demonstration at Naval Air Station New Orleans (Belle Chasse), today known as Joint Reserve Base, New Orleans. The aircraft lost power during takeoff and came to rest beyond the end of the runway. The pilot suffered minor injuries, but was able get out of the jet safely. The show was completed with the use of a backup aircraft.

Although the jet received significant repairable damages, the Navy wrote it off as a complete loss. Rather than dispose of it or return it by truck to the Blue Angels home base at NAS Pensacola, FL, it was offered to NAS New Orleans to serve as an entrance display, where it remained for approximately 35 years, until replaced by another more contemporary aircraft.

After its removal, the aircraft was acquired by a group of aviation enthusiasts from St. John the Baptist Parish in the early 1990s. These individuals had expressed interest in constructing a military museum at the airport. Unfortunately, after years of attempts and the loss of key members, the museum did not materialize. The aircraft is permanently mounted on an elevated podium at the entrance to the airport. The Port of South Louisiana acquired the airport from St. John the Baptist Parish in 2010, and it was renamed Port of South Louisiana Executive Regional Airport in 2015. Since acquiring the airport operation, the Port explored options for repair and restoration of the historic aircraft.

All former Navy aircraft remain the property of the National Naval Aviation Museum. The Port of South Louisiana submitted a request to the museum to become the aircraft sponsor, and has accepted the museum’s responsibility to become the caretaker of this historic aircraft. The Port of South Louisiana, working in partnership with the National Naval Aviation Museum, will restore and permanently display this historic aircraft in its current location near the airport’s entrance.



Blue Angel #6 during its time flying with the 1967 team, shown here flying over Mt. McKinley, Alaska.



The historic Blue Angel #6, located at the entrance of the Executive Regional Airport in Reserve, Louisiana

About the Port of South Louisiana

The Port of South Louisiana is a 54-mile port district on the Mississippi River between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, encompassing the parishes of St. Charles, St. John and St. James. The facilities located within the port's district consistently handle over a quarter billion short tons of cargo annually, ranking it the largest tonnage port district in the Western Hemisphere, the nation's greatest grain exporter, and the number one energy transfer port in the United States. Along the 108 miles of deep-water frontage on both banks of the river there are seven grain transfer facilities, four major oil refineries, 11 petrochemical manufacturing facilities and several other facilities for a total of more than 50 docks owned and operated by an impressive group of resident tenants such as ADM, ArcelorMittal, Dow, Cargill, DuPont, Motiva Enterprises, Marathon, Shell, Nucor Steel, Occidental, Valero, and Occidental Chemical. To learn more, visit us at www.portsl.com, like us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/portsl), and follow us on [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/portsl).

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