

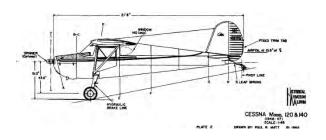
## International Cessna 120/140 Association

Issue 418 Spring 2021 Feb/Mar/Apr



Gaia Marrs with "Colonel Ruby" sitting on an alpine plateau in Alaska. (page 4)

## In this issue Tech-Talk by Victor Grahn



## 2021 Convention Preview



Restoration of Prototype 140A (UNO part 7)



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## Gaia Marrs and Colonel Ruby McCarthy Alaska 1946 Cessna 120

I first reached out to Gaia in late summer when I was searching for material for an upcoming newsletter article. She submitted a picture to Blake Mathis which was used as the September 2020 photo for our calendar. The photo captured my attention for two reasons. First, I had been hoping folks would pick-up on my attempt together photos/stories of off-field landings in our beloved taildraggers. Second, I had to believe that there were more great photos where that first one came from. Gaia graciously corresponded with me through emails, and as she answered my questions, the story just kept getting better and better.

Gaia grew up in the Wrangell Mountains with her parents who worked with a non-profit organization providing outdoor education. The Wrangells and the surrounding St. Elias National Park are somewhat sparsely populated, so Gaia remembers small airplanes being part of their regular transportation. Glaciers and rivers are prominent features in the area, so it was natural for Gaia to begin working as a rafting tour guide when she was a teenager.





## Gaia says...

I met my husband when he came to guide for a hiking and climbing company. He is a climber, backpacker, skier, mountaineer. He is not a pilot although he started learning at one point. Poor guy decided it wasn't worth the expense and then I ended up incurring the expense instead. We ended up buying both companies and running them for almost 20 years until we sold in 2019. We guided everything from 2-hour history tours and half day hikes to multi-week river and mountaineering expeditions, technical climbing, backpacking, etc.

Many of our trips were accessed by bush plane, including our single day rafting trip where we packed all the boats and people into a 1949 Dehavilland beaver and 1950's Cessna 185 every day! So bush planes have been a part of my life for a long time.

Page 4



I got my PPL back in 2009 and flew other people's planes for almost a decade before I managed to buy my own. I mostly flew a friend's 172 with bush tires and did some great stuff with it but was eager to get in a tail-wheel plane. In 2019 I managed to buy this great little 1946 120 with an O-200 engine. The guy I bought her from had done all sorts up Alaska upgrades, most notably the big 29" bush tires and mico-VGs. I added a starter because I didn't want to be hand-propping it, especially with little kids around (my daughter was 3 in 2019).

This summer I installed a small kid seat in the back for my 4 year old, which worked out great! Even with full fuel, my husband and I up front and my 4 year old plus day pack in the back, we are right at gross and can go on some fun adventures as long as the strip isn't too short and the terrain forgiving for a slower climb.





Gaia's daughter, Raven carrying on the tradition of an Alaskan woman bush pilot.

I decided the plane needed a name (is that a girl thing - to name your vehicles?!). I wanted to name her after an awesome woman from her era, and decided on Colonel Ruby, after Ruby Bradley. She was a tiny little army nurse during WWII and the Korean War who saved many lives. Look her up - very cool lady! So Colonel Ruby is my little bad-ass plane - not the biggest or most powerful, but the one with the most heart (5)



We are based in McCarthy, in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, Alaska during the summers and that is where most of my flying experience is. I have so enjoyed visiting many familiar strips and many new ones in my little plane over the last couple years, including high alpine strips, river bars, and the rugged coast of southern Alaska, which is really only accessible to those with big tired bush planes (many in our small town have never been there, although it is only an hour away by plane).



With just me and half fuel, my little 120 can do so much! I am by nature a cautious person/pilot, and even more so now that I have a family to care for, so I haven't even pushed her limits as much as some would have. Even so, we have had some serious fun together.





Kayak Island

Most of these pictures are from short flights bopping around the "neighborhood" for an hour or half a day. With a family and business (until recently) I mostly don't get away for long chunks, but fortunately the immediate vicinity is an awesome place to fly! The two photos below are the Kennicott Glacier at different times during the year.





A slightly longer trip was the full day down to the coast, Bering glacier, kayak island, beach landings etc. I took a friend and we bopped around for the day and then flew to Cordova for the night and home the next day.



The Bering Glacier as it reaches the coast



Nizina River and Mile High Cliffs

I asked Gaia to draw on her lifelong knowledge of the area and see if she could identify the wildflowers that she caught at some of her landing spots.



Dandelions and Jacob's Ladder at the May Creek Strip



Yellow Oxytrope along the Chitina River



I asked Gaia if she could provide more information regarding the Tundra Tires. She told me that they were already installed when she purchased Colonel Ruby. I did some simple internet research and found a couple of Supplemental Type Certificates (STC) for the large wheels/tires. I also found some discussion on our website forum regarding pros and cons of different applications and tire pressures. One quick discovery was the Alaskan Bushwheel Tundra Tires.

FAA APPROVED MODEL LIST (AML) SAITI015SE FOR INSTALLATION OF ALASKAN BUSHWHEEL INC. TUNDRA TIRES

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We have just welcomed our 2nd daughter, so we really need to upgrade to a 4-seater plane. As much as I hate to think about letting Colonel Ruby go, she is for sale and will probably be with her new caretaker by the time this article is published.

We have a home here where we will continue to spend a chunk of our summers although we are now settling in the lower 48 with our 2 girls so they can have a more stable school life, etc.

I haven't really gotten it up and running yet (working on getting some other parts of life settled first!), but my intention is to run a small "one woman company" designing custom Alaska wilderness-focused adventures for families and small groups. My website is <a href="www.wildravenadventures.com">www.wildravenadventures.com</a> if anyone wants to contact me about this project.







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## Tech Talk ...by Victor Grahn

Seat Belt Brackets.



For the start of 2021, we'll start with an updated FAA communique from 5 years ago. During two accident investigations during the 2014 era it was determined that numerous aircraft had left the factory with aluminum seat belt brackets mounted between the seats. Following the accidents, The FAA issued SAIB addressing promptly а replacement of the aluminum bracket with steel. (CE-15-13) Cessna also issued a Service Bulletin SEB 25-13 recommending replacement of the bracket. In mid-December of 2020 the FAA issued an "Airworthiness Concern" paper addressing this seat belt bracket. It seems that after issuing the SAIB there has been a second fatal accident where the center bracket failed.

When this information was made public back in early 2015,

Our association both via the Website and "in person" forums at Sun-n-Fun, Oshkosh and Annual Conventions the maintenance presenters showed pictures of the affected and part and recommended replacement. As I recall there was some lively discussion on the Website forum at the time as well.

## A little back history:

I suspect that Cessna determined fairly early in production that while weight savings is good, an aluminum seat belt bracket isn't a good part to use for weight reduction. We don't have a total number of aircraft that left the factory with the aluminum bracket, in fact it's difficult to estimate or guess. Cessna changed the drawing years ago and no record (that we're aware of) exists on when the change was made in the production line. Somewhere between 100 and 1000 airplanes left the factory with the aluminum bracket. We suspect most of the brackets have been removed after the information was published in 2015, but we need to be proactive to get the rest.

How would you know if you have an aluminum bracket or a steel bracket? How would you know if you are "safe"? It's very straight forward. Take a magnet, of any kind or strength. Touch the center seat belt bracket with your magnet.



If it sticks, you're ok. If it doesn't (aluminum magnet anyone??) then you need to remove the bracket and install a new one.

Page 14

New Steel brackets are available from Yingling in Kansas and from other sources. I wouldn't hesitate to use a steel seat belt bracket from a salvage facility if that is all you can find. If you have trouble locating one, contact me and I may be able to assist.

Keep in mind that while most aircraft have this set up, some early aircraft had one lap belt for both seats. Obviously, you won't have the center bracket with these airplanes, however I would seriously consider installing one, as the load of one belt is probably not up to the task of holding two people.



As long as we're on the subject, another consideration is that the outer brackets that are riveted to the fuselage are usually made of aluminum. Later serial numbers had steel brackets. I would recommend removing the aluminum brackets given the opportunity and installing steel pieces. Cessna knew they had an issue years ago, since there is a communique covering adding additional rivets to these brackets. For the most part these brackets held, while the center one would let go.

As far as I know, none of the steel center brackets have let go, but then again, many folks have

installed shoulder harnesses, which absorb some load as well.

We in the Association feel that everyone should check this bracket and if you happen to meet a fellow owner who does not belong to the association, do them a favor and bring up the subject. (an onboard magnet may be required flight tooling for a while into the future!) Listed below is the official communique from the FAA.

The FAA is investigating overload failures of Cessna 120 and 140 aluminum seat belt mounting brackets. After a fatal accident in 2014, the FAA issued Special Airworthiness Information Bulletin (SAIB) CE-15-13, which recommended that owners, operators and maintenance personnel of the affected airplanes replace aluminum brackets with steel brackets following Cessna Single Engine Service Bulletin SEB-25-03. Since then, a second fatal accident occurred where the aluminum seat belt mounting bracket failed.

The Wichita ACO Branch recently issued an Airworthiness Concern Sheet (ACS) to address failures of aluminum seat belt mounting brackets of Cessna 120 and 140 airplanes. The FAA is requesting information on damage or known failures observed on the seat belt mounting brackets common to Cessna 120 and 140 airplanes, including description of damage, available photos, airplane serial number, type of seat belt installed, and details of failure discovery.

https://www.faasafety.gov/files/notices/2020/Dec/Cessna Seat Belt Mounting Bracket ACS.pdf https://www.faasafety.gov/files/notices/2020/Dec/SEB-25-03.pdf

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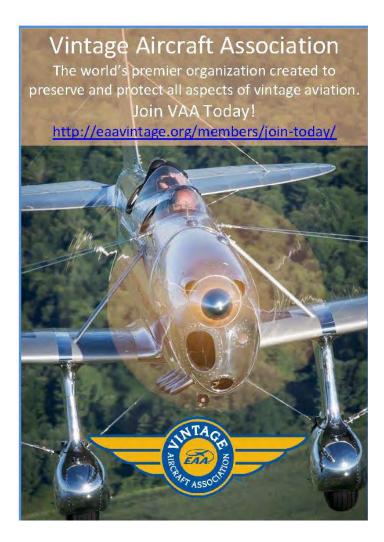
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## **Uno Part 7**

## The discovery, recovery and restoration of the prototype Cessna 140A



... Ken and Lorraine Morris
See Summer 2019 issue
for Uno part 1
Fall 2019 for Uno part 2
Winter 2019 for part 3
Spring 2020 for part 4
Fall 2020 for part 5
Winter 2020 for part 6

Things slowed down considerably in the spring of 2020, for many reasons. Covid being the most obvious, and the fact that Oshkosh 2020 was looking a bit iffy. We got busy with family issues and put Uno on hold for about 4 months.

We got the engine parts back after inspection, and all the cylinders were already assembled and ready to put on the engine when Ken gets the case and innards together, (how that for technical terms!). So, the engine sat in pieces on the workbench, covered with a clean sheet.

Ken spent considerable time getting all the panel wiring finished up, the instruments installed, and the static system put together. We installed a new Aux Power receptacle.



Instruments installed and ready for the radios

Then Ken fitted the lower false panels and made sure they fit correctly. Since these were new to the plane, it required a bit of finessing.

Somebody had painted the cylinder rocker box covers a lovely blue, so we traded them for some ones that could be made back to original. Little did we know, we already had an extra set, but it was hidden in a box from when we moved. We keep finding extra parts from the move that somehow got stashed where I could easily find them, but never did. Go figure... The old engine also had a chromed airbox, so we scrounged around and found a nice non-chrome airbox. About this time, we were ready for radios.



On the trailer going to the radio shop

In the middle of July, we loaded the fuselage up on a trailer and trucked it about 15 miles to the radio shop. With the plane in pieces without wings and firewall, the radio shop can fit it in the corner and work on it with a bit more ease.



Making a plan with the radio man



Protective film applied around the cabin prior to radio installation

So now the fuselage was absent, and we could get to work polishing on the parts we still had. But instead, we took another hiatus, and didn't do much of anything on the plane. With Airventure now officially being canceled, the pressure was way off, so we became slackers for a few more months...

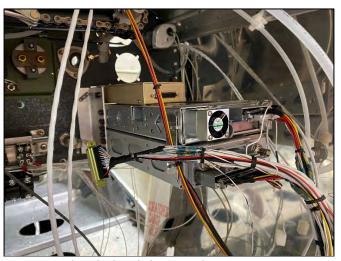


Coming home from the Avionics Place

September rolled around, and the Radio shop called and said, "Come and pick it up". So we did. We had visited Uno in Radio Jail several times over the past few months and were able to make some decisions during its incarceration.



New radios installed in the panel



Radios behind the panel

We were able to plan some inconspicuous antenna placements in order to make it easy to polish around them and not appear very obvious.

An example of this is the placement of the GPS antenna. Most times this is placed just forward of the aft spar in the center of the cabin top. What I have found is that the antenna coax coupler is a 90-degree angle and hangs down so far that it kind of pokes into the headliner. This bothers me, so we were able to move it to the side of the cabin top, outside of where the headliner is. This allows for the antenna coupler to work and not poke anything. It also keeps the cabin top looking clean and not so much like a porcupine.

Another 'thing' we did.... We had replaced the instrument panel because the old one was so cut up and in bad shape. The replacement was so original it only had one jack hole on each side, and that was for the microphone.

Remember back in the day there was no headset jack. I really wanted to leave only the mic jack and install headset and mic jacks underneath the panel so they weren't visible. That way it would look original. But, in the interest of ease of use, I relented and now we have headset and mic jacks on the panel.



Headset jacks installed in the common location

The other thing we took out was the speaker. It hangs down in the center of the cabin top, and nobody uses them anymore, so we removed it.

After the plane got home, we decided to install the windshield. But before we do that, I wanted to polish as much as possible on the areas around the windshield, so I don't have to worry about polishing the windshield by accident later.



Ready for the windshield

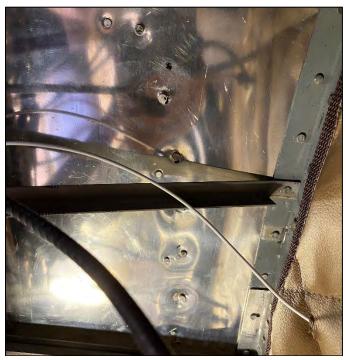
So, I masked off all the areas and polished the top of the cowling, the top of the cabin top and the sides. That makes it easier in the end.



Polishing around the windshield areas

Then we spend a whole day installing the windshield. It required lots of trimming and refitting. We thought it would slide right in, as most of them do. But for some reason this one was difficult. We think that it may be because it was the first one, or it could be because it has been wrecked so many times there are parts on there that weren't originally. We aren't sure, but by the time the day was done it was installed.

This plane has had more than a few windshields over its life. Because of that the holes that the front windshield strap uses are HUGE. I think the last time the windshield was installed it was put in with screws. Since we are trying to be original, Ken agreed to try and put in big number 5 rivets. He was hesitant but was willing to give it a try, and it worked! Screws are easier to install, but I don't like the look and since we were going for original, we had to give it a try. The firewall was out, so that made the install much easier.



Size #5 rivet tails for the windshield strap

The other issue is that the inside of the new aluminum is pretty shiney, so trying to buck the rivets and see how you did is difficult. You keep seeing reflections of the rivet, so it looks too tall, as the reflection makes it 'grow'.

Now that the windshield and the radios were in, and we thought that we were finished under the panel, we were ready to install the firewall.





That only took an hour, because before we clecoed it in place I went over every rivet to find a bucking bar that would be appropriate for each rivet. Luckily, we have a toolbox full of strange bucking bars but there is always one that can't be bucked with the bars available. Ken always says that two or three bucking bars will buck 80% of the rivets. It will take about another 15 different bucking bars to buck 18% of the rest of the rivets, and the remaining 2% of the rivets will require about 100 different bucking bars. He is right.

We did buy a couple little tungsten bucking bars and they are really useful. They are small but very dense, so we were able to do a lot of the rivets in tight spaces. I think there were only 2 rivets that I was unable to get to and we had to resort to a cherry rivet to do those.

Once the firewall was in, Ken started pulling cables through the firewall, and putting new copper primer lines in and such. Ken installed the cleaned up and inspected Gascolator. It was a different style than what we were used to, but it matched what was in the parts manual, so back it went.

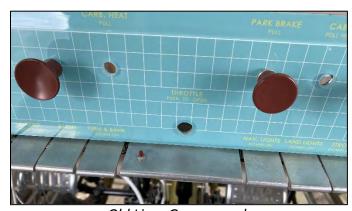


Original style Gascolator

Right about now we had been looking at the lower plastic panel we had painted and installed. It was a green, as listed in the Cessna manual, but looked way too limey green. In fact, it was obnoxious. I couldn't imagine sitting in the plane and flying for any length of time looking at that color.

The problem is that Cessna states that the color should be 'Blue-Green'. There is no color code at all. We had been given a small interior piece from Rich Harris, but hadn't paid much attention to it. After finding it in a box and looking at it closer, we realized that his piece was the color we were after!

Ken went back to the paint shop and had them remix the paint to better approximate the color from Rich's interior piece. Ken pulled the old bright green panel off, painted a new panel and put it on and it was MUCH BETTER. Now that we were happy, we went ahead and painted all the interior false panels as well.



Old Lime Green panel



New panel installed with proper color (Lorraine holding the old Lime Green panel)

Ken was really scooting along putting the engine together. He put the new cylinder assemblies on and we ordered a new Hartzell lightweight starter and alternator. It will save a bunch of weight!





I got busy and made up firewall blanket. I purchased a piece of firewall blanket insulation from Aircraft Spruce. It was some fiberglass quilted with thin aluminum foil on each side. I quilted that to some brown burn certified leather I had and finished the edges.



Firewall blanket before and after installation



We polished up the cabin heat vent deflector and ring before they were installed. It only took a couple of hours to install the firewall blanket. While we were putting it in, and Ken was filling holes from the firewall, I was the Tinnerman Queen.



I decided to get OCD and make sure all the tinnermans were oriented the same way. It's the little things...

I am now on the hunt for some screw tip covers. My hands look like we got a new kitten, as they are all scratched up. All the A&Ps out there will know what I mean. I am hoping that I can find something that I can put on the screws that are poking out of the firewall to protect anybody's hands that are up there working on stuff.





On a side note, I went to take a picture of the panel and had to double take. The inside of the boot cowl is new aluminum, so they reflect everything. As I said before, it is tough to work on a plane with polished or new aluminum inside, as it reflects weirdly.



This picture makes it look like we have 4 sets of rudder pedals installed.

After the firewall blanket was installed, and I was upside down under the panel, we installed the engine mount.





We had the mount powder coated in black, so it was looking FINE! Ken made sure to clean off the powder coating around where the engine bolts went through to make sure there was a good grounding on the engine.

After that was in, Ken briefly installed the engine mount bolts and rubbers. A previous owner had chromed the aluminum rubber guards. They looked pretty good, so we decided to keep them.



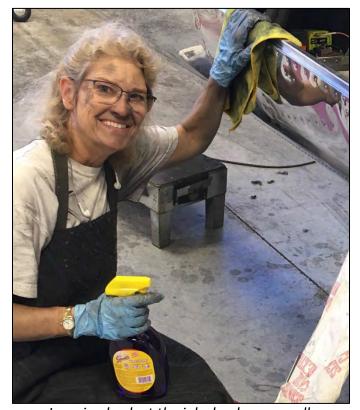


All new panels in the correct color

Then Ken realized that we were missing the compass correction card holder, so he made one! It turned out perfect.

I started to install the radio call sign numbers on the panel and realized that the number was one digit off! N3778V was not correct! So, we called up Aerographics and ordered the correct one.

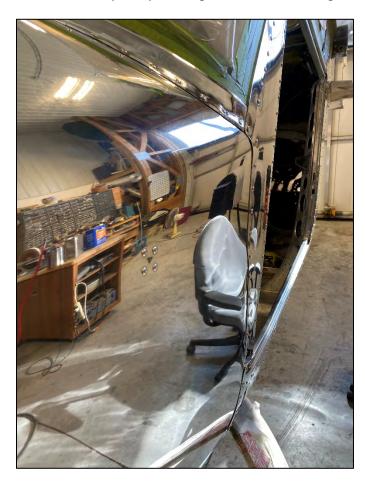
Now it is time, again, to polish. I think I will be over it by the time we are done with this plane!



Lorraine back at the job she does so well



It's hard to keep the polishing dirt out in the hangar



Left boot cowl polished to a mirror finish

We put the vertical fin and rudder together to get the stripe placement correct and used old photos of the original plane to figure out where it was supposed to go and how big the N numbers were on the tail. We want it to look like it just rolled off the line. The vertical fin will be polished before it is sent to the paint shop.



Meanwhile, I kept polishing on the wings and fuselage.





It has been a constant try and re-try to get the sequence of polishing grits correct.

I have come to the conclusion that the sequence that works good for me on NEW aluminum is;

Nuvite F9 compounding with a wool pad, F9 with the Clyclo, then F7 and S both with Cyclo.

The C seems to leave little scratches that the S won't get out. I did some side by side comparisons to come up with this plan. So far so good.

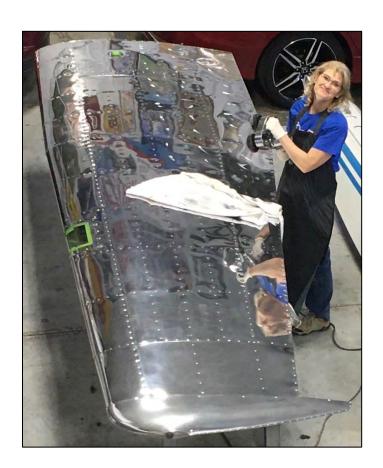








Common Clyco Polisher





## From our convention hosts... Christian and Heidi Vehrs



Wow, I can't tell you how excited I am about the upcoming 2021 convention that Heidi and I are hosting here in Atlanta

## **Convention Schedule**

Heidi and I would love to kick it all off by having you over to **our house for Burgers, Bonfire and BYOB** Sunday and Monday evenings for early arrivals.

There is so much to do here in the Atlanta area that there is no way to schedule it all in. Let's start by providing the plans for Wednesday – Saturday.

Wednesday Poker Run will fly over sight-seeing locations such as Lake Lanier, Stone Mountain, Pinewood Movie Studios, the Atlanta Motor Speedway, and will include a stop at the Huey/Cobra flight museum. We will have a lunch at one of the poker run locations on Wednesday.

## <u>Thursday Flyout to McCauley Propeller Systems</u>. (Tentative)

Located just off site of the Columbus Airport (KCSG). We are planning to have a tour of the McCauley Propeller facilities with lunch included. <a href="https://www.georgiamanufacturingalliance.com/events/mccauley-aviation-plant-tour-columbus-2020">https://www.georgiamanufacturingalliance.com/events/mccauley-aviation-plant-tour-columbus-2020</a>

Thursday evening dinner at the CAF hangar back at our convention airport in Peachtree City.

<u>Friday Morning Maintenance forum, lunch, and</u> **the flying games** at the airport.

<u>Friday Evening hotel banquet</u> with door prizes and awards.

<u>Saturday morning departure</u> or stay longer for Atlanta area sightseeing or Braves baseball game.

I have blocked rooms at the hotels starting the Sunday evening before the convention. That will allow anyone to come in a little early if they need to skirt some weather, or if you would like to get more sight-seeing and activities in during the week. Heidi and I will be available all year to help plan your visit, and we would love to show you our beautiful area.

In the following pages, I have listed several of the attractions in the Atlanta area. Please feel free to plan your visit with us by including day trips to one or more of these attractions.

This should be a great one! Make plans to join us. Christian and Heidi Vehrs, Georgia State Reps.







## 2021 Convention Preview August 24 – 28 Falcon Field (KFFC) Peachtree City, Georgia











Home of the CAF

https://dixiewing.org/

## **Convention Hotel**



## **Crown Plaza**

201 Aberdeen Pkwy Peachtree City, GA 30269 (770) 487-2666 Convention room rates \$105.00

## Mention group code CES120

Breakfast coupons can be purchased for a discounted rate of \$14.

## **Alternate Hotel**



## Hilton Garden Inn

2010 North, Commerce Dr. Peachtree City, GA 30269 (678) 827-8400 Convention room rates;

\$109.00 with Continental Breakfast

or

\$114.00 with Full Restaurant Breakfast

Mention group code CES120



## **770-486-2181** mention **Cessna 140 Rates**

Economy/Compact/Intermediate - \$47.99

Full size - \$50.99 Premium - \$59.99 Minivan - \$80.99 Standard SUV - \$85.99 All attractions on this page are located at Pemberton Place (a downtown area greenspace) and are walking distance from each other.

126 Ivan Allen Jr Blvd NW, Atlanta, GA 30308

These attractions are 32 miles (40 minutes) from the convention hotel.



## **World of Coke Museum**

Plan 3-4 hours

The World of Coca-Cola is a museum, located in Atlanta, Georgia, showcasing the history of the Coca-Cola Company. The 20-acre complex opened to the public on May 24, 2007.

https://www.worldofcoca-cola.com/



## **Georgia Aquarium**

Plan 4-6 hours (cafeteria inside)
Plan extra time for shows, i.e. Sea Lions, Dolphins,
4D theater, sharks.

https://www.georgiaaquarium.org/



## **CNN Studio Tour**

Plan 3-4 hours (large food court)

Get behind the scenes of Cable News Network (CNN), which is based right here in Atlanta, Ga. A 50-minute guided walking tour lets you peek into the newsroom, control room and much more.

https://discoveratlanta.com/things-todo/attractions/cnn-center/



## **Centennial Olympic Park**

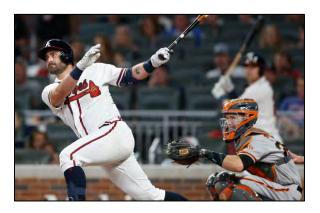
Fountains and Skyview Atlanta Wheel http://www.skyviewatlanta.com/

## All attractions on this page are located at various distances from the convention airport and hotels









## **Zoo Atlanta**

30 miles – 40 min Plan 4-6 hours

Behind-the-scenes experiences with some of our wildest residents turn a trip to the Zoo into the chance of a lifetime.

https://zooatlanta.org/

## **Stone Mountain Park**

51 miles – 55 min Plan 4-8 hrs

Stone Mountain Park is Georgia's most visited attraction with more than 3,200 acres. Fishing, Hiking,
Train ride, Skyride to the summit.

https://www.stonemountainpark.com/

## **Warner Robbins Museum of Aviation**

100 miles – 1hr 46 min (Plan all day)

The Museum of Aviation is the second-largest aerospace museum of the United States Air Force, including four exhibit buildings and more than 85 historic aircraft on 51 acres

https://museumofaviation.org/

## **Callaway Gardens**

56 miles – 1 hr 10 min Golf, Bike Paths and Butterfly House Treetop Adventure and Ziplines Beach, Resort and Spa Birds of Prey show

https://www.callawaygardens.com/

## **Braves Baseball**

38 miles – 41 min Monday, Tuesday August 23-24 vs New York Yankees

Friday, Saturday, Sunday August 27-29 vs San Francisco Giants

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