

Behind the Scenes with PDX Airport Duty Manager Brian Burk

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Brian Burk was destined to work at PDX. Born and raised in Portland, he's been into airplanes and airports for as long as he can remember. In middle school, he joined the Civil Air Patrol cadet program, and one of his first summer jobs was serving frozen yogurt at PDX. After high school, he became a licensed pilot and worked on the ramp one summer during college.

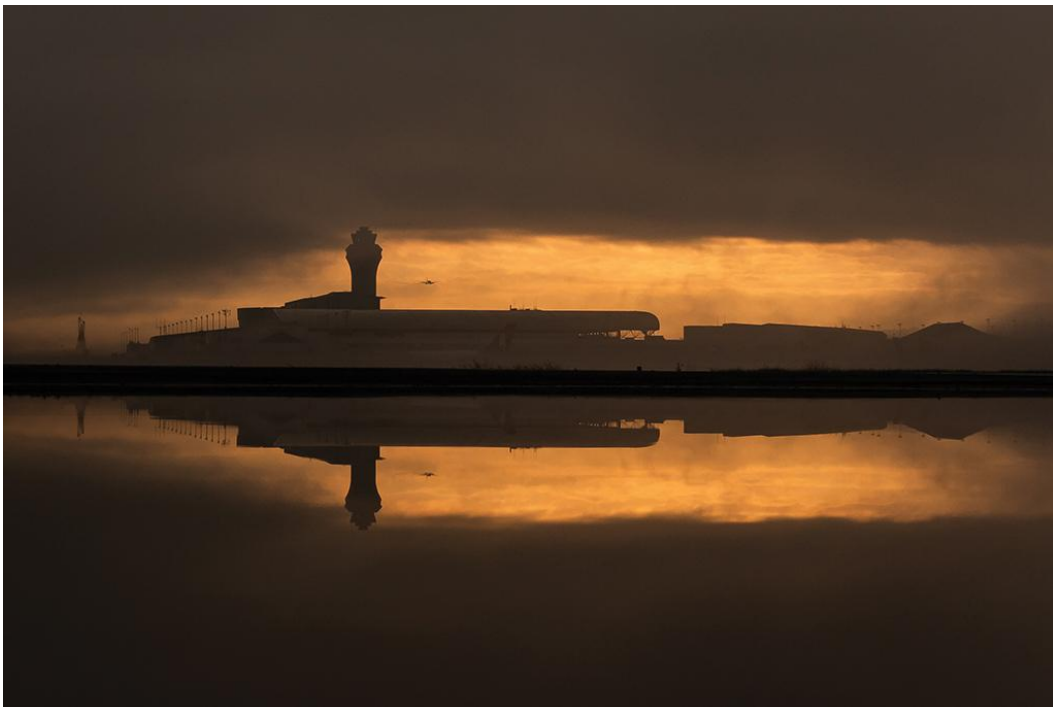
"I always wanted to be involved in commercial aviation one way or another," said Brian.

Now an airport duty manager, Brian loves that he gets to experience the airport at all hours of the day. "I like to watch the weather change, watch the sun and moon travel across the sky, and watch the ebb and flow of people and airplanes depending on the time of day or year. It seems chaotic sometimes, but there's a natural rhythm to it all."

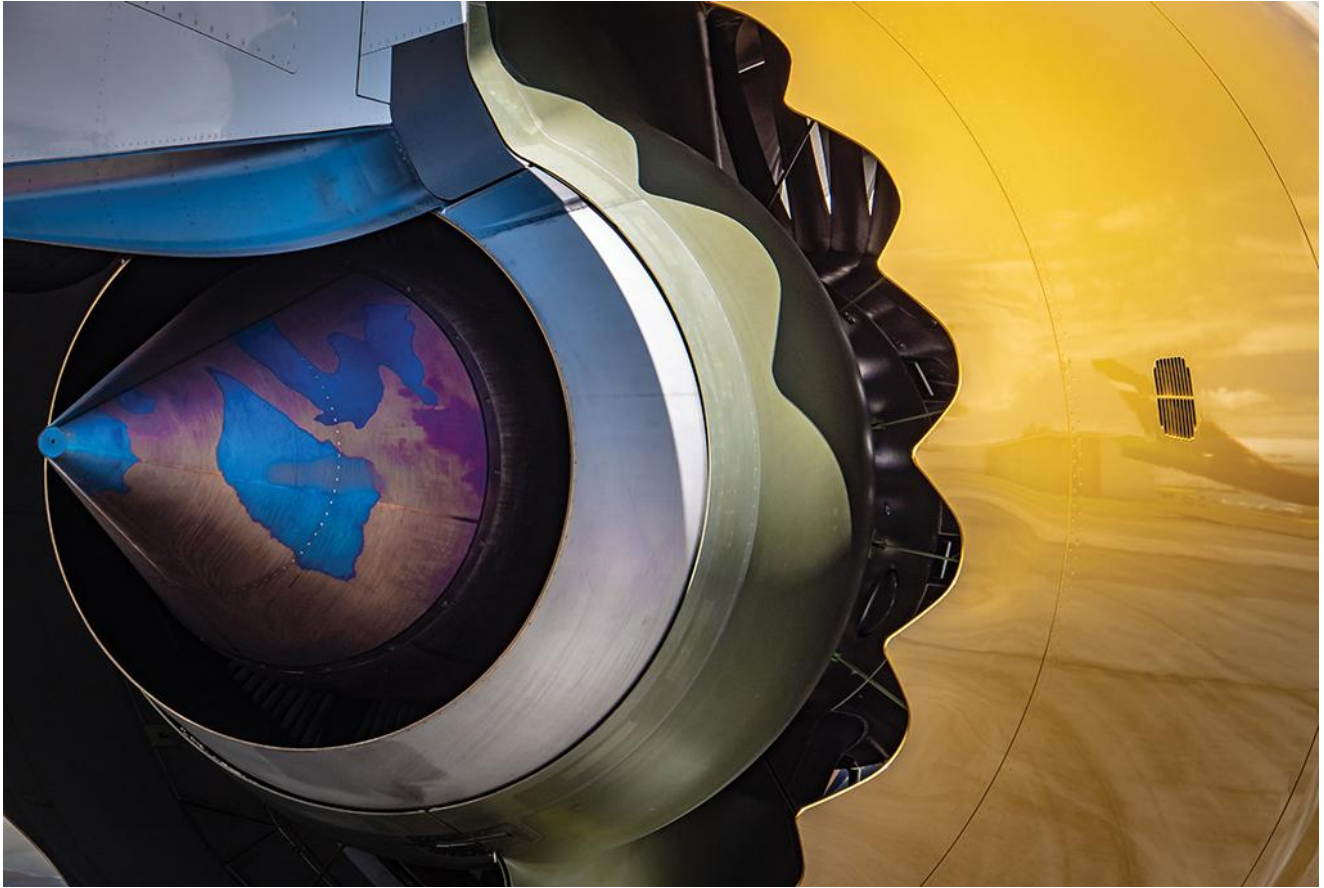
On top of managing operations and logistics at the airport, Brian is also a great photographer. A lot of the beautiful behind-the-scenes photos we share come from him.

“The airfield is a unique shooting environment because it’s one of the few places in Portland with an unobstructed view of the sky in all directions—no trees, powerlines or tall buildings to get in the way. The sunrises and sunsets are really great here,” Brian said, reflecting on why he loves snapping photos at PDX. “I look for candid, human moments that capture PDX employees going about their day-to-day activities. Pretty shots of airplanes are great, but I like to have people in my photos as much as possible.”

Three of Brian’s photos were **selected by Aviation Week as “Editor’s Picks” this year.** We asked Brian to take us behind the scenes and give a few more details about each photo.



From Brian: This shot was taken several years ago, using the reflection from a large rain puddle. The location is on the old Northwest Ramp near the airport fire station. A bunch of ground-up concrete had been stored at this location to be used as part of the base for the Concourse E extension. It was so heavy that when it was hauled away, it left behind an impression in the ground, which is why the puddle formed there. You can see the concrete boom at the Concourse E extension worksite at the left of the photo.



From Brian: Taken in May 2020, this is the back of one of the engines on a Gulf Air Boeing 787 that was painted at the PDX Boeing paint facility. The airplane has been sitting at PDX for months, a victim of the global aviation slowdown during COVID. The blue discoloration on the conical part of the engine is part of a natural metal oxidation process. Eventually, it will fade away.



From Brian: Taken in April, also due to the COVID slowdown, these Alaska Airlines Boeing 737s sat for months on Runway 3/21 (which was closed for long-term aircraft storage). The airplanes have since been put back in service and the runway reopened.

Other 2020 PDX Photos

Explore more of Brian's favorite photos from 2020 below.

