

*Continental Airport Express*  
INTEGRATED CAMPAIGN

Continental Airport Express is Chicago's premier ground transportation company, providing affordable, reliable transportation services between O'Hare and Midway airports and all locations in downtown Chicago. This airport shuttle service transports over one million passengers annually to destinations that include downtown Chicago hotels, door-to-door business and residential locations, McCormick Place, Lincoln Park, and also suburban hotels, business and residential locations. It also offers private charters to service business or personal events.

**The need**

Airport Express traces its history back to Frank Parmelee, who founded Parmelee Transportation Company in 1853 to transport passengers between railroad stations. In 2003, the company celebrated its 150th anniversary. Airport Express wanted to commemorate this milestone with a year-long program of activities that would draw attention to the occasion from city officials, customers, referral sources, the general public and its own employees.

**Our approach**

Hodge Schindler developed a full scale campaign comprised of the following elements:

- A media relations program that included distribution of a media kit containing a history of the company along with photos dating back to the company's founding.
- A booklet documenting the past 150 years of company lore.
- An employee relations program that called for bestowing a "Frank Parmelee Award" every month on an employee whose commitment to customer service emulated that of the company founder.
- A two-week photo exhibit, "From Trains to Airplanes: 150 years of Chicago Transportation History," at the Richard J. Daley Civic Center.
- A street-naming dedication, during which the corner of Monroe and Racine, the site of an early company stable, was renamed "Frank Parmelee Way."
- A gala anniversary event for 250 people at the Chicago Historical Society.

**The outcomes**

Airport Express received feature coverage in the Chicago Tribune, Chicago Sun-Times, Where Magazine, Chicago Reader, Lerner Skyline, the Chicago Crusader and BUSride magazine.

The exhibit and anniversary event drew attention and praise from key audiences, including city officials, who regulate the company's service, and the travel industry, which is a major source of referral business.

The anniversary booklet was honored with a Golden Trumpet Award by the Publicity Club of Chicago.