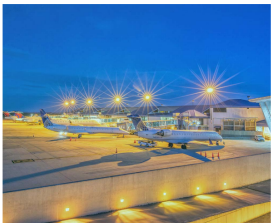# How America's "Best Small Airport" Took Off With Beanworks AP Automation

Nicknamed the "Rocket City" for being the home of NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center, Huntsville, Alabama, is a hive of innovation. The town also boasts Huntsville International Airport (HSV), recently chosen as one of the four locations across the USA to serve as a test site for drone research.

As Huntsville has continued to attract a highly-skilled workforce, it became apparent for HSV to help their accounts payable (AP) team transition from a manual, outdated system to a more dynamic model.

"We have an employee suggestion program, and one of our team members suggested finding a better way of doing AP," says HSV's Financial Controller, Donna Saunders. The leadership was already eager to go paperless and immediately got on board.

> "50% of our accountant's time was spent filing invoices, retrieving them, and then getting them ready for an audit."
>
> *Donna Saunders, Financial Controller, Huntsville International Airport*

Last year, Huntsville International Airport was ranked the 'Best Small Airport' in North America

One of the issues with the existing system was managing a growing volume of invoices. A team of three employees had to process over 600 invoices per month and all on paper. "50% of our accountant's time was spent filing invoices, retrieving them, and then getting them ready for an audit," describes Saunders.

AP documents were coming into the office via mail and email. About 30 different approvers had to sign-off invoices, and the process to move them through the chain was a severe challenge. "We weren't sure where invoices were, how long they had been at a desk, or where they were in the approval process," Saunders adds.

The solution was simple – HSV needed to automate their AP and fast. After reviewing seven different AP solutions, they chose Beanworks to digitize their invoices and purchase order process. HSV's team found that Beanworks easily accommodated their specific AP needs without causing a dent in their budget.

> "Beanworks has made that approval process so much easier. We don't have to think about approvals or pull out our company policy. We've already worked those rules into the software."

"The biggest benefit is that we don't have to go to the filing cabinet. We can just pull up the invoice or the purchase order within Beanworks and check the details. Everything's right there," says Saunders.

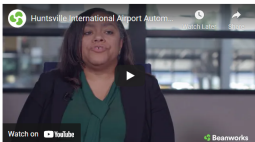*With cloud access, HSV's managers can review and approve invoices from anywhere*

To meet the strict policies needed to protect their cash flow, HSV uses Beanworks' online approval channels customized to meet their needs. For example, all invoices that are above USD $5,000 are sent to the director for review. "Beanworks has made that approval process so much easier. We don't have to think about approvals or pull out our company policy. We've already worked those rules into the software," Saunders says.

"We're talking about the tall, four-drawer lateral filing cabinets," she points out. Before automation, HSV would keep two fiscal years' worth of documents in the office. It took up a significant amount of storage space and racked up costs.

> "There's less overtime in accounting and we're happy about that."

Beanworks changed that. The cloud stores seven years' worth of data giving the team full access to AP documents without any physical space.

The three staff members that were previously spending 40% of their workweek keying in invoices now have more time for strategic work. "They've picked up new duties like business development because they have more time. There's less overtime in accounting, and we're happy about that," Saunders says.

You could say AP automation has rocketed HSV into the future, but they're not done yet. "We're now looking at Beanworks' AI data capture feature," Saunders says, referring to a new tool called SmartCapture, which helps AP teams save time and reduce data entry errors by using AI to capture invoice details. Eventually, HSV plans to implement such technologies to support their finance team build better business strategies.