At a time when newspaper headlines have been full of transportation advances in outer space, it is difficult to dramatize the significance of dedicating one new airport.

This airport, however, will serve the largest of our national parks—an area dedicated to preserving a part of nature's past so that future generations can know what this land looked like at the time the first mountain men came into the Yellowstone country to trap and hunt.

This airport brings the jet age to Yellowstone country.

Paradoxically, it should help preserve the natural beauty of these mountains and make the beauty they
hold more precious, for the enjoyment of even more people.

I say paradoxically, for there is a contradiction apparent in the assertion that an airport at the gateway of a national park, which surely will further increase the number of visitors, will help keep the park as it is. But, if all the travelers who use this airport were to come by car, the pressures for more roads and highways would be accelerated. And it is the roads and highways which must dramatically change the park's character.

This airport is a reminder of the vital relationship between transportation and the national parks--in fact, between transportation and the quality of personal enrichment which people obtain from visiting a national park. Ad writers will logically make much of the opportunity more people will have to spend
more time in the park—enjoying its beauty—and less time in transit. To those who must cut short their stay, this can be a great asset.

This airport will aid in preserving Yellowstone National Park and its features in two ways. First, it is located outside the Park, thereby avoiding disturbance and intrusion to the park setting. Second, it will serve as a base for smokejumpers who fight fires in the national parks and national forests. In a very real sense, this airport helps the National Park Service to follow its historic mandate of 1916 to preserve those scenic wonders for future generations and to make them available for public use and enjoyment.

There are good reasons why airports should not be located inside national parks. We must not destroy that to which we come for inspiration. As Secretary
Udall once pointed out—"We are going to determine the face of the American continent one hundred years from now by where we locate... our outdoor projects."

Do not think for one moment, however, that vigorous concern for America's beauty need stifle progress. The Department of the Interior and all its bureaus intend to meet today's challenge today. There will be more airports located close to national parks.

The most recent national figures of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association showed some 9,000 airfields now serving general aviation. The Federal aviation plan projects several thousand more airports in the near future. It is significant to note that 60 percent of the airfields and 90 percent of the aircraft in this country are privately owned.
These figures forecast large increases in air travel to national parks and other outdoor recreation centers.

The Department of the Interior and the National Park Service encourage the location of needed commercial air facilities near national parks. There is a commercial airport actually within only one national park—Grand Teton. However, this facility existed before the Jackson Hole area was included within the Park boundaries.

There are airports operating in Death Valley National Monument, the Wright Brothers National Memorial, Cape Hatteras National Seashore, and Grand Coulee Recreation Area. The National Park Service is considering airport needs near other major recreation areas. But wherever possible we must keep the superlative scenic treasures of our national
parks free from intrusion.

The key to enjoyment of the finest remnants of our scenic and wildlife heritage lies in part in accessibility. The national parks must be accessible for large numbers of people to get to the park. Within the park there needs to be adequate networks of roads and trails. But let's encourage people to leave their cars and use the trails more. I often visit Shenandoah National Park in Virginia. Skyline Drive is often bumper to bumper—a million visitors a year—but a short few feet from the drive, the Appalachian Trail over which my family and I hike is usually quiet, and long hikes can be made without meeting another person.

Transportation and parks have had an historic and intimate relationship and will continue to do so. Transportation helped to make the national parks
role in their future. But even the founders of the National Park System could not foresee how fast we would grow, or how mobile we would become.

In 1934, the "National Park Year", 4,000,000 persons visited the parks.

In 1940, the "Travel America Year", the figure was 16,000,000.

And today in the beginning of "See the U. S. A. Year", an estimated 100 million Americans will visit the parks.

We must be ready to serve the visitors of tomorrow.

As this airport begins operation many people and agencies can take pride in it: the Federal Aviation Agency, the Forest Service, the Montana Aeronautics Commission, and the National Park Service.
the local community will benefit.

Projects such as this are a long time coming—too long, in fact, if we are to keep pace with needs. As early as 1946 there was local interest in an improved air facility in this area. And now today, nearly 20 years later, the objective is realized.

Those who benefit from this airport and from the great National Park which it serves will come from every corner of the country and from areas all over the world. This new air link will open many routes of travel to new visitors.

In a very real sense it will encourage even larger numbers of people to visit the Park. This observation brings me full circle to the paradox of progress I mentioned earlier. For one of the toughest
problems of national park management is the pressure of people whose numbers strain and exceed the capacity of accommodations, services, and facilities.

But we are a nation seldom content not to have our cake and eat it, too. The national parks have been doing a remarkably good job of meeting visitor demands that spiral upward, while at the same time doggedly preserving and protecting the natural beauty and heritage of the lands within the parks.

Yellowstone Park is no exception.

The new service we inaugurate today begins a new chapter in the history of the Park and the region.

To all those who will come and go from this new airport we say, "Have a smooth flight."