



TELLING YOUR
Airport's Story

Telling Your Airport's Story

Contents

Communication Plan Checklist	1
Creating a One-Page Fact Sheet	2
Website Guidance	5
Getting Started with Social Media	7
Setting Up a Facebook Page	10
Setting Up a Twitter Page	16
Press Release Template	27
PowerPoint Slides	28

This document will help you begin telling your airport's story by guiding you through creating a basic communication plan. Follow the steps—you will discover new communication channels and learn to use them to spread your message. You can tell a compelling story for a low initial investment!

For more resources, visit
www.go.ncsu.edu/marketingtoolkit

Communication Plan Checklist

Pick a topic to focus on.

- Economic impact
 - Jobs
 - GDP
 - Regional economy
- Accessibility
- Community engagement
- Growth
 - Expansion
 - Construction
 - Tenants
- Local business support
- Customer service

Your topic should be a feature, benefit, or noteworthy quality of your airport. Pick something you can support with evidence!

Condense your topic into three main points.

Example: Economic Impact

"Smithfield airport supports 300 local jobs, reducing unemployment in our region and boosting the economy."

"Smithfield airport is an economic anchor organization; 25% of local businesses rely on our airport every day."

"One 50-passenger round-trip flight injects \$10,000 into our region. Smithfield airport serves 20 such flights every day."

These points are what you want your audience (community leaders, media outlets, customers) to remember and repeat.

Develop collateral.

- A One-page fact sheet
- Presentations
- Web pages
- Social media pages
- Press releases
- A Newsletter
- On-site displays
- Strategic media ads

Remember to stay laser-focused on your three main points in every piece of collateral you produce. Do not deviate!

Schedule education sessions.

Encourage employees, tenants, civic groups, and elected officials to share your message.

Update your communication plan and collateral every year.

Set a timeline for updating your stakeholders on changes to your messaging.

Creating a One-Page Fact Sheet

You will use your one-page fact sheet at various times and places, e.g. as a handout with community presentations, as a leave-behind after legislative visits, on your website, and in your terminals. It should look professional!

Obeying the structure outlined here will ensure that you tell your airport's story in an easy-to-read format. Be careful to use cogent and concise language too!

Decide how you will produce the document.

You could produce it in-house, using a word processor and a consumer printer. If you do, be sure to purchase high-quality paper (preferably matte or semi-gloss).

If your budget permits, you could contract a full-service print shop (Sir Speedy, Alpha Graphics) to design and print your one-page fact sheet for you. You can also use one of many "quick print" centers (Office Max, Staples), if you want to compose it yourself.

Write a short introduction to your airport and its mission.

Example: Customer Service

"Founded in 1995, Middleboro airport is a general aviation airport serving businesses and travelers all over the region. Our mission is to provide excellent service to all our customers."

Summarize your airport's story to establish your topic.

Example: Economic Impact

"Middleboro airport is an economic engine for our region. The traffic we serve is essential for the vitality of local businesses."

Example: Construction Project

"Middleboro Airport's new environmental projects are significant to the airport, passengers, and the general health of the region."

Example: Growth

"Air service at Smithfield Airport grows every quarter; we're serving more passengers than ever before."

Elaborate by stating your three main points.

Examples: Economic Impact

"The proximity of a thriving airport generates more than 200 jobs for people in our community."

"Businesses in our region are able to expand, and businesses elsewhere are able to relocate to our region, because of Middleboro Airport."

"Middleboro Airport contributes \$100,000 yearly to our region, which is 10% of the region's GDP."

Examples: Construction Project

"The new runway moves the airport's master plan forward and prepares us for continued growth."

"By prioritizing environmental projects now, we are positioning the airport to expand and serve our community better in the future."

"Once Middleboro Airport's new parking lot is complete, we will be able to support more tenants, leading to a projected 15% increase in operating revenues."

Examples: Growth

"Middleboro has experienced record growth in the past year, a trend we are working to sustain. Our goals are to retain existing service and attract new service to popular destinations."

"Local travelers choose more and more to "fly local." This trend contributes to the profits of our airport and the airlines we serve."

"Many of the airlines we serve reported record profits last year, If they can continue to be profitable in our region, they will continue to provide excellent service."

The examples listed here demonstrate the kind of language appropriate to use in a one-page fact sheet. Write your own to fit your airport's style!

Mix and match! If your airport's story is about its economic impact, information about a construction project or growth could be germane.

State a few “quick facts” about your airport.

- Name and location
- Primary service area
- Main services
- Airlines/routes
- Length of runways
- Size of terminals
- Passengers per year
- Operations per year
- Number of tenants
- Nearby attractions

Conspicuously place your contact info.

- Airport name and address
- Phone number
- Website URL
- Social media account names (e.g. “@airport”)
- Specific names & numbers to contact for more info

Many organizations regularly contract amateurs—e.g. hobbyist and student photographers—to take professional-quality photos for free, only on the condition that they be credited whenever their photos are used.

Don't forget images!

Captivating pictures help tell a more dynamic story. Hiring a professional photographer will always produce the best results; but, if money is tight, you might solicit a hobbyist or a student from a local art school.

Website Guidance

Make your website the gateway to your brand.

Present your logo, flash your slogan, highlight your main selling points, and show clients what they should expect from your airport.

For example, Coastal Carolina Regional Airport's website highlights that it is "Close, Convenient, and Connected." Their brand is centered on those three main points.

Study other websites and appropriate good ideas.

For some good examples of airport websites, look up any of the following:

Coastal Carolina Regional Airport

www.newbernairport.com

Johnson County Airport

www.jocogov.org/deptpage/airport-commission/executive-airport/

Davidson County Airport

www.flyhighlexington.com

Harnett Regional Jetport

www.warrenaviation.com/

Content Ideas

- A description of your airport's facilities, services, and amenities
- An aerial map of the airport
- Parking info
- Ground transportation options/recommendations
- Directory of businesses at your airport
- Lease or development opportunities
- Weather
- Rates and charges
- Air service schedules
- Flight status info
- Photos of facilities, hangars, staff, etc.
- Social media links
- Testimonials
- Videos
- FAQ
- Links to additional info (press kit, one-page fact sheet, history, newsletter)
- Contact info

Getting Started with Social Media

Facebook

Use Facebook to tell the broader story of your airport, using photos and posts about events, updates, news, and topics relevant to your followers.

Frequency of posts:

Min: once per week

Max: once per day

Good times to post:

Weekdays 9am, 1-3pm

Saturday and Sunday from 12 - 1pm

Thursdays and Fridays typically have higher traffic.

Post your best content on days with higher traffic for the most reach.

Twitter

Use Twitter to share quick information, generate traffic to your website and showcase news related to your airport. Retweet (and add comments) from other relevant feeds, such as your county government, aviation interest pages, and local news organizations.

Frequency of posts:

Min: twice per week

Max: five times per day

Good times to post:

12pm, 3pm, 5 - 6pm every day

Wednesdays typically have higher traffic.

Familiarize yourself with popular hashtags used for aviation, your community, and the type of content you are posting. Hashtags are useful, but do not use them excessively. Three per post max.

Instagram

Use Instagram to share the best photos of the airport, aircraft, events, staff, etc.

Frequency of posts:

Min: once per month

Max: three times per week

Good times to post:

8-9am, 5pm

Monday, Friday, and Saturday have higher traffic.

For Instagram posts, keep text descriptions short; utilize filters on photos and popular trends on the platform, such as Boomerang (which plays short videos on a loop), to generate more interest.

Content Ideas

- Upcoming events (boy scout tour, nearby university move-in day, safety seminar, etc.).
- Live Tweet events at your airport.
- Airport updates (runway improvements, new amenities, new staff, etc.).
- Pictures of the airport lobby, terminal features, etc.
- Encourage pilots to take and share in-flight pictures and tag the airport.
- Videos of aircraft landing, your airport from the point of view of a pilot, events, etc.
- Aviation interest articles.
- Interesting facts about your airport's history, its community, pilot safety, etc.
- Aviation conference information.
- Social media contests. (For example: "Share your best in-flight photo and tag us to win a \$15 gift certificate.")

Always get permission from pilots/clients before posting photos of aircraft visiting your airport. In all cases, blur out the N-number before posting.

Advice for Building a Social Media Following

- Add links to your social media pages in staff email signatures, newsletters, memos, etc.
- Send announcements about the launch of your social media pages through any relevant listservs.
- Write press releases announcing social media pages and encouraging followers to "like" those pages.
- Include keywords in your posts as hashtags (e.g. "#airport").
- Invite your Facebook friends to "like" your page.
- Host social media contests and give away prizes to followers, clients, people who like the page or comment, etc.
- Respond to tags of your airport's pages. For example, if someone posts a picture after flying through and tags the airport, reply to the post with a kind message, thanking them for visiting.
- Change your profile pictures and cover photos often to freshen up your pages and reflect new events.
- Include visuals with as many posts as possible—pictures, videos, graphics, etc.
- Tag participating groups, pages, and people whenever possible. For example, if a boy scout troop visits the airport for a tour, write a post about that, and tag the boy scout troop (e.g. "@Troop123").

Repeating information is fine. If your airport opened on February 3, post about it every year on February 3. If you are posting about an event, post an announcement a few months before, two weeks before, one week before, the day of the event, and again after the event has occurred.

Social media sites categorize content by hashtags A users can, therefore, search for a word and, if a post includes that word, then that post will show up in his search results.

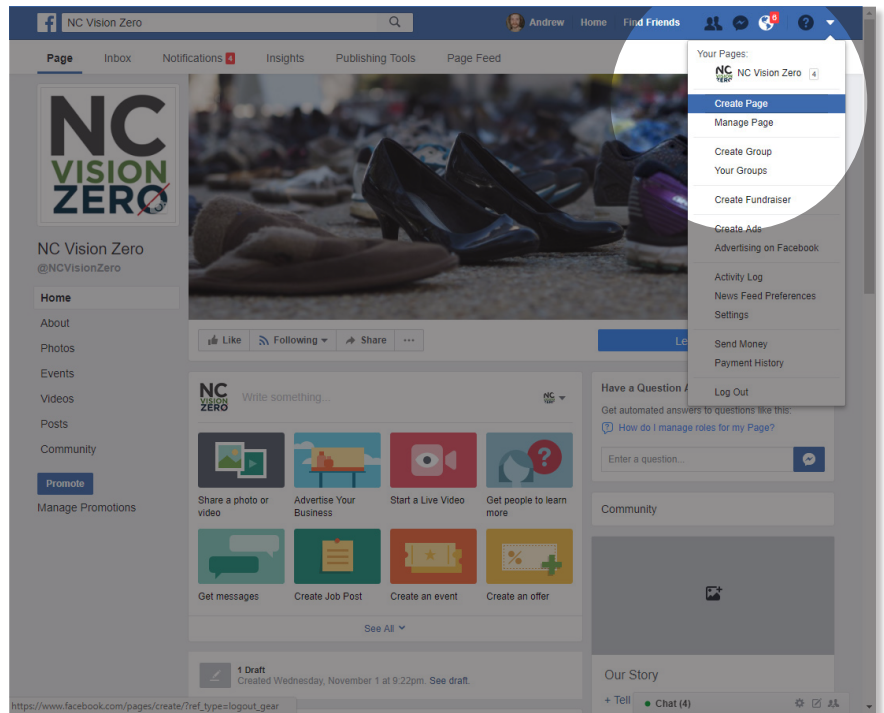
Facebook prioritizes video in its news feed; so, your posts are more likely to be seen if you attach a video!

How to Set Up a Facebook Page

1. Create a page.

On Facebook.com, click on the triangle on the far right side of the blue bar at the top of the window. Select "Create Page" from the drop-down menu.

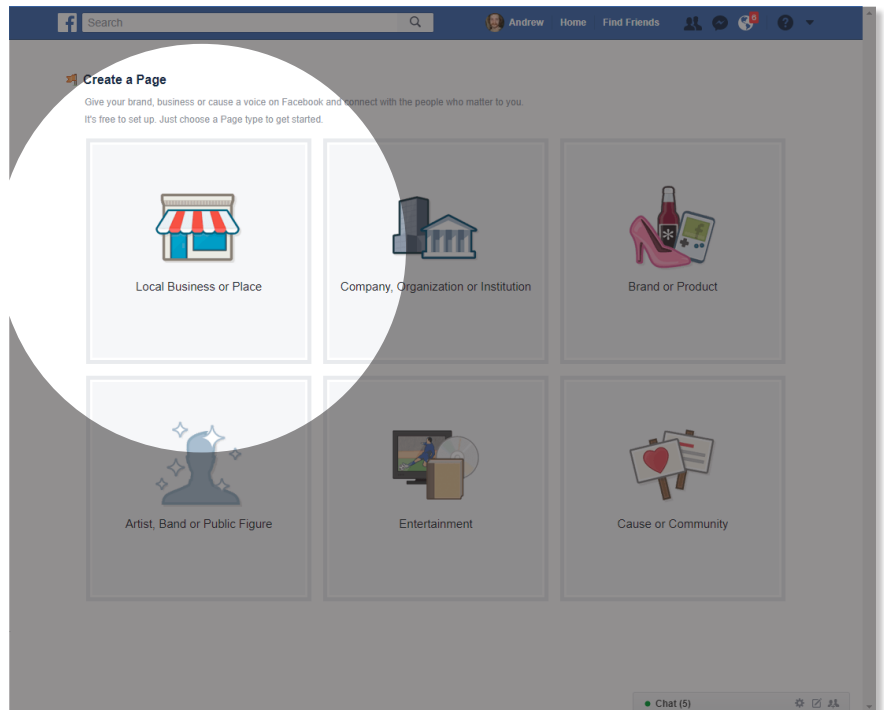
Tip: The airport's page has to be connected to a personal account. Sign into the primary Facebook page manager's account before starting this process.

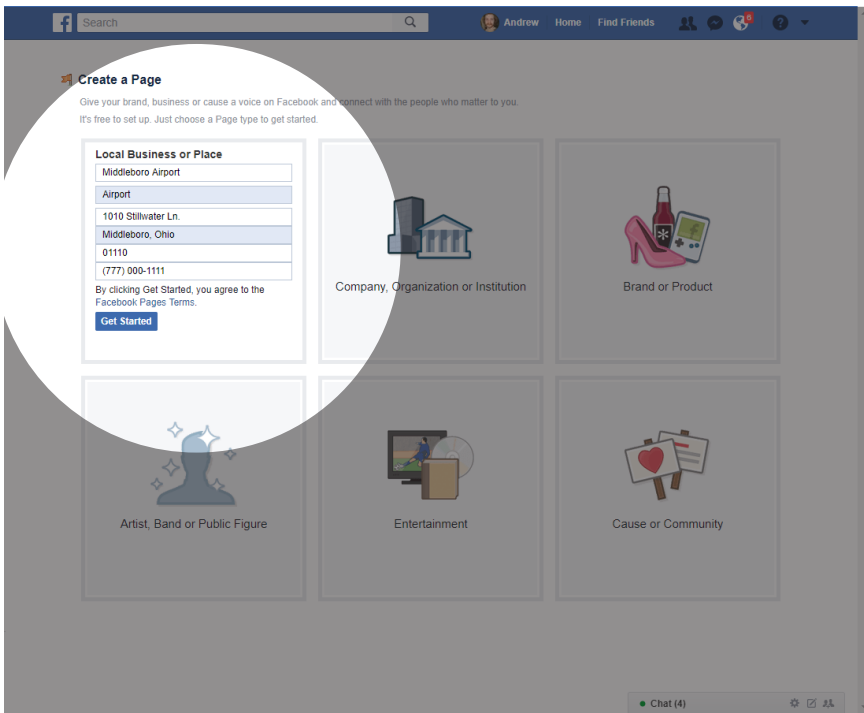


2. Select a category.

Click on the category that best describes your airport.

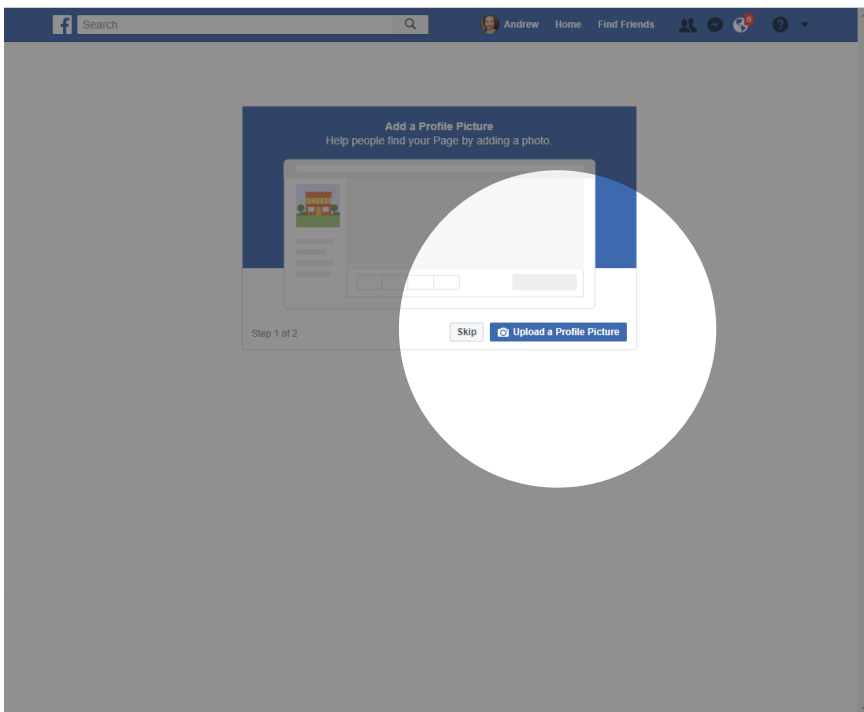
Tip: You should probably choose "Local Business or Place."





3. Enter your account info.

Once you select a category, Facebook will ask for your airport's info. For "Page Name," type your airport's name. For "Page Category," type "Airport," and so forth. Then, click "Get Started."



4. Add a profile picture.

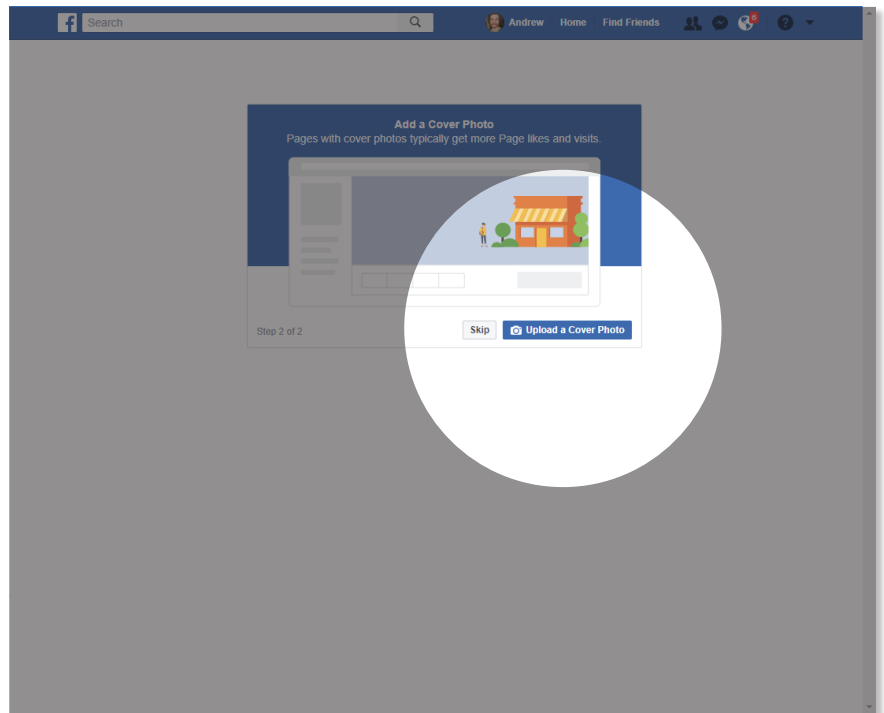
Once you have entered your airport's info, a couple of windows will pop up to help you set up your account. Click "Upload a Profile Picture" in the bottom right.

Tip: Use your airport's logo for your profile picture.

5. Add a cover photo.

The second window to pop up prompts you to add a cover photo. Click "Upload a Cover Photo" in the bottom right.

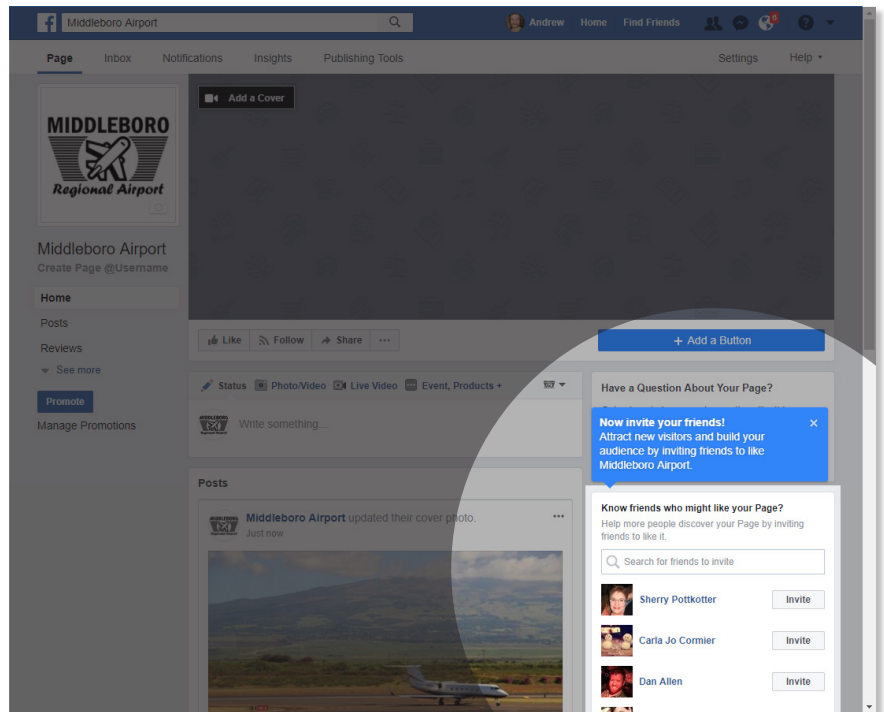
Tip: Use a clean, professional photo of your airport for your cover photo.

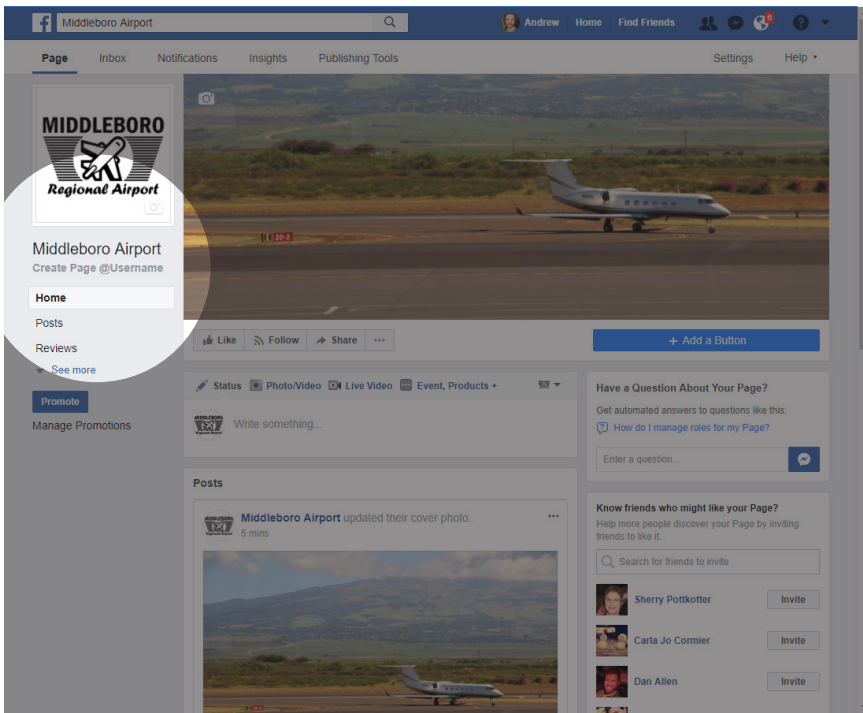


6. Invite your friends to like your page.

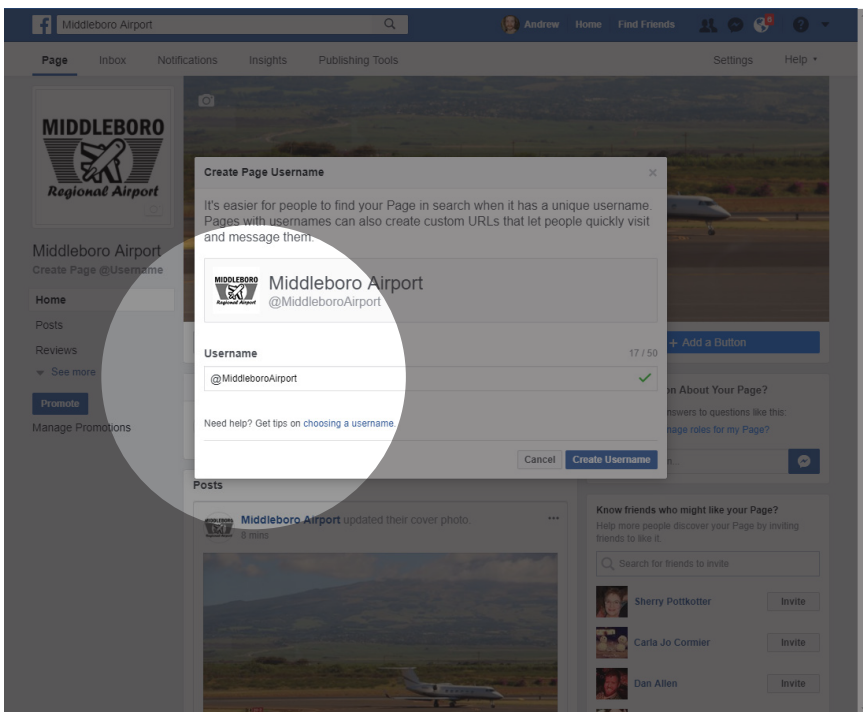
If you want to skip this step, click the cross in the blue word bubble.

Tip: By "inviting" friends to like your page, they can help get the word out that you have a social media presence now.





7. Create a user name.
Click on "Create Page @Username" below your profile picture.



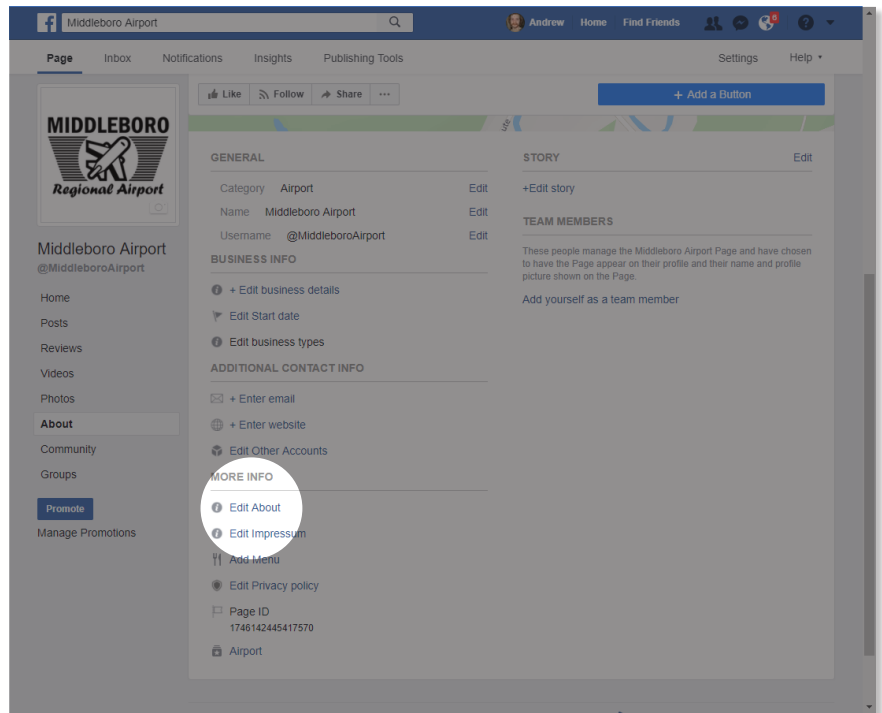
8. Try Alternatives.
In the window that pops up, you may have to try a few alternatives, in case your first choice is already taken. If a name is not taken, you will see a green check mark appear immediately after typing it out.

Tip: People will tag your airport by this name, so it should be simple, easy to find, and easy to remember. For example, if you wanted to post a picture of Johnson County Airport on Facebook, you could tag the airport by typing "@JohnsonCountyAirport." Tagging Johnson County Airport's page in this way links back to it, and your post would show up when anyone searched for that tag.

9. Briefly describe your airport.

Click "See more" below your profile picture, then click "About." Type out a short description of your services, amenities, some interesting facts, etc.

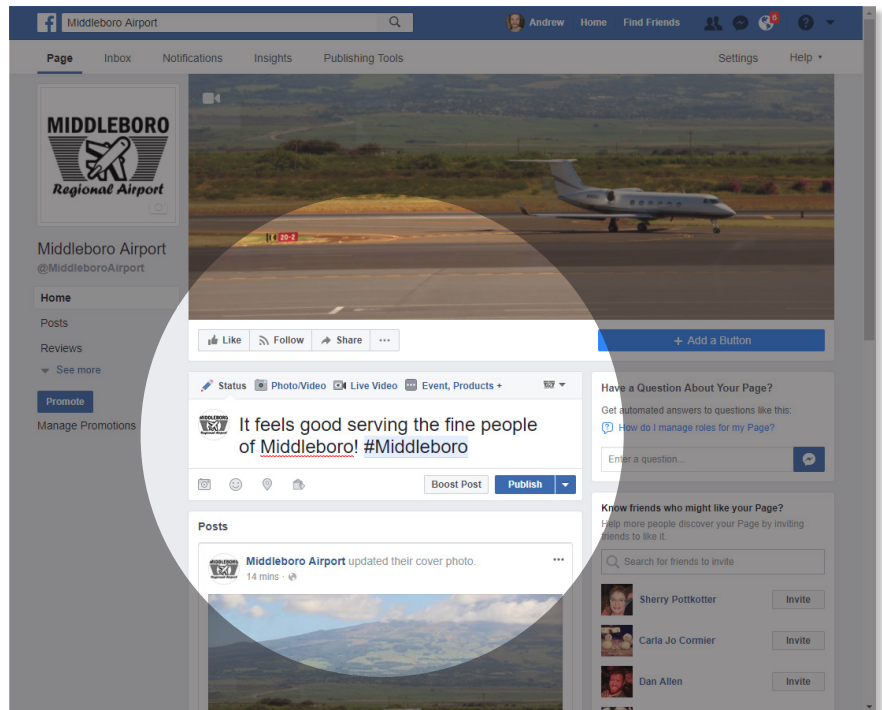
Tip: Keep the three main points of your communication plan in mind.

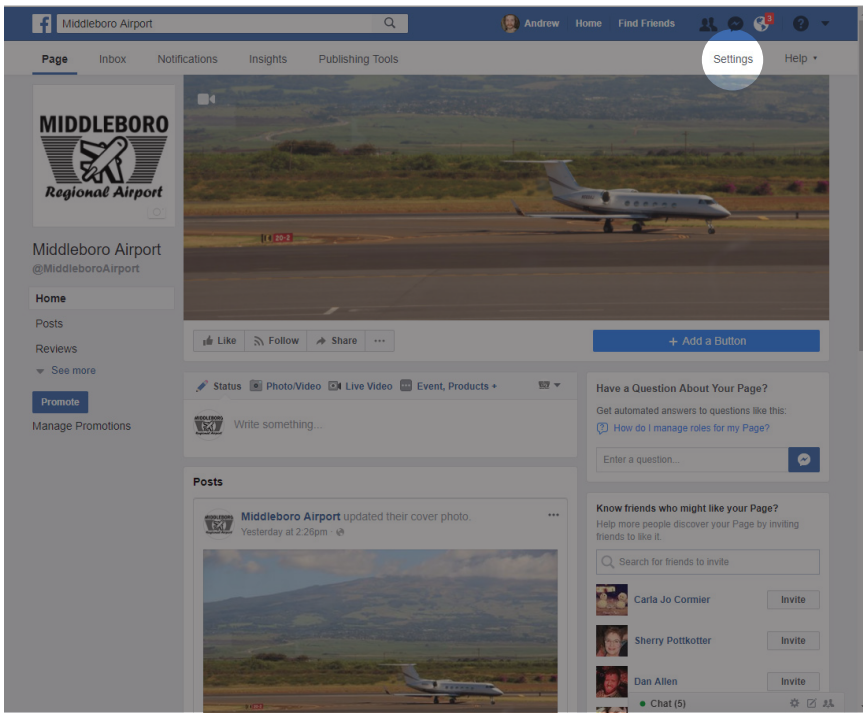


10. Post.

Compose posts in the text field in the center of the page, Click "Publish" once you are done composing.

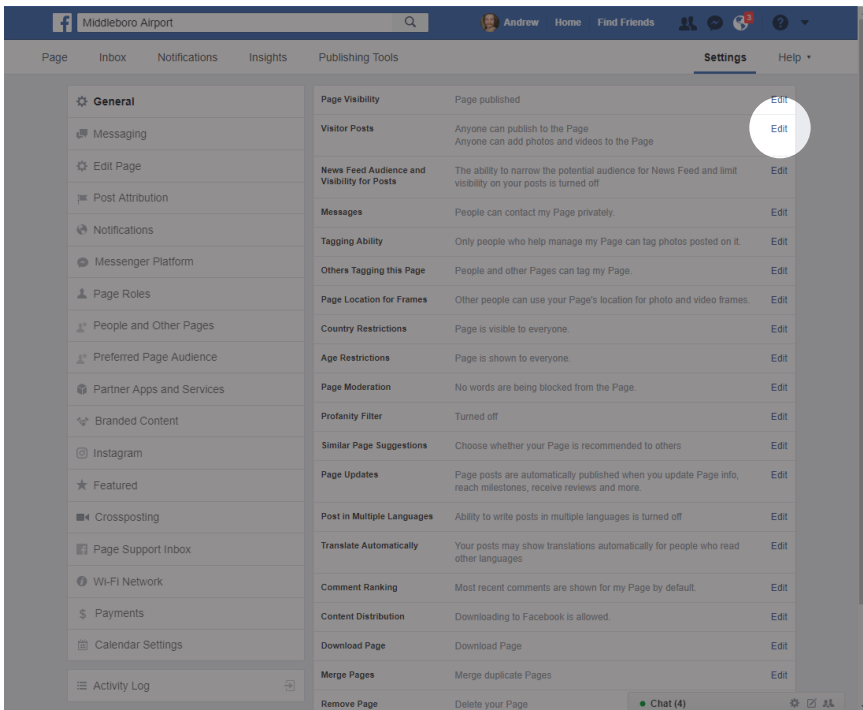
Tip: If you want to call someone's attention to a post, you can "tag" that person or organization. Add "@" in front of that person's or organization's user name in the body of your post.





11. Change Post-Review Settings

You should change the settings on your Facebook page so that all posts and tags must be approved before they go public. Click on "Settings."

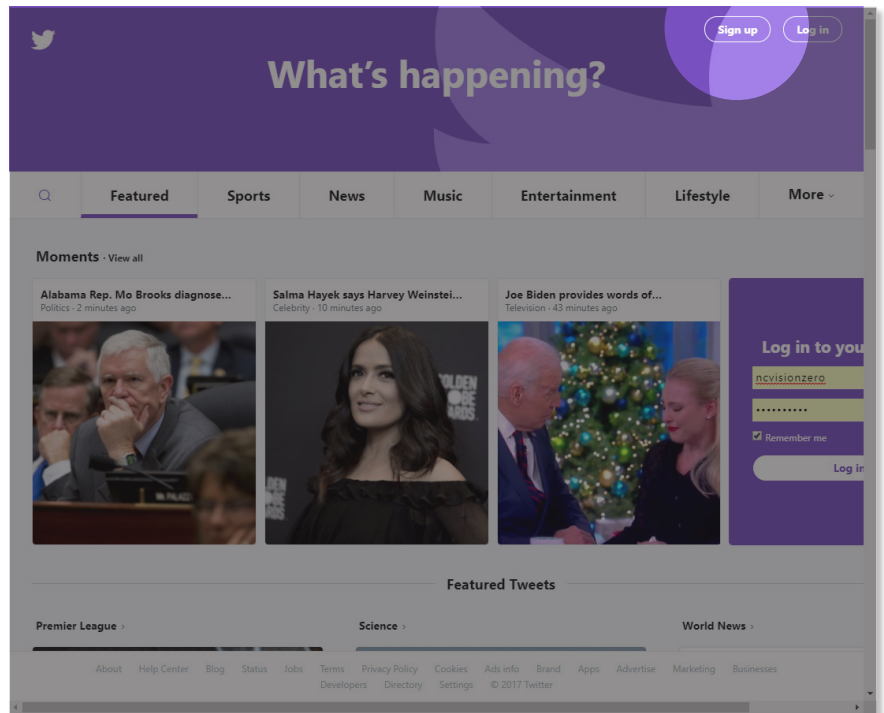


12. Click "Edit" next to "Visitor Posts" and select the second check-box that appears: "Review posts by other people."

How to Set Up a Twitter Page

1. Create an account.

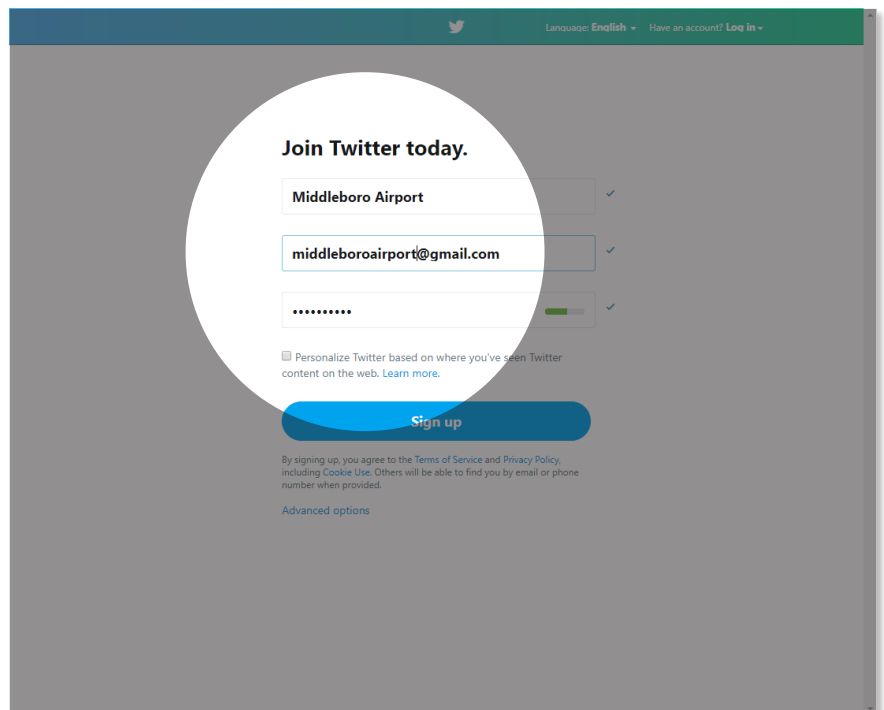
On Twitter.com, Click "Sign up" in the upper right corner.

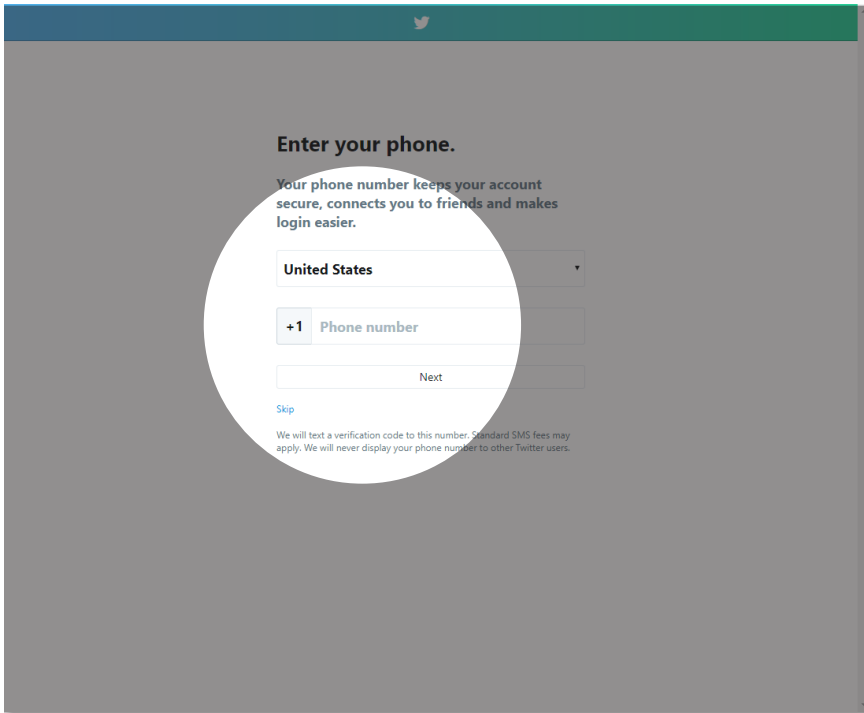


2. Enter your account info.

Type in the name of the airport, an email address, and a password. Then, click the "Sign up" button. This information only identifies your account—no one else will ever see it.

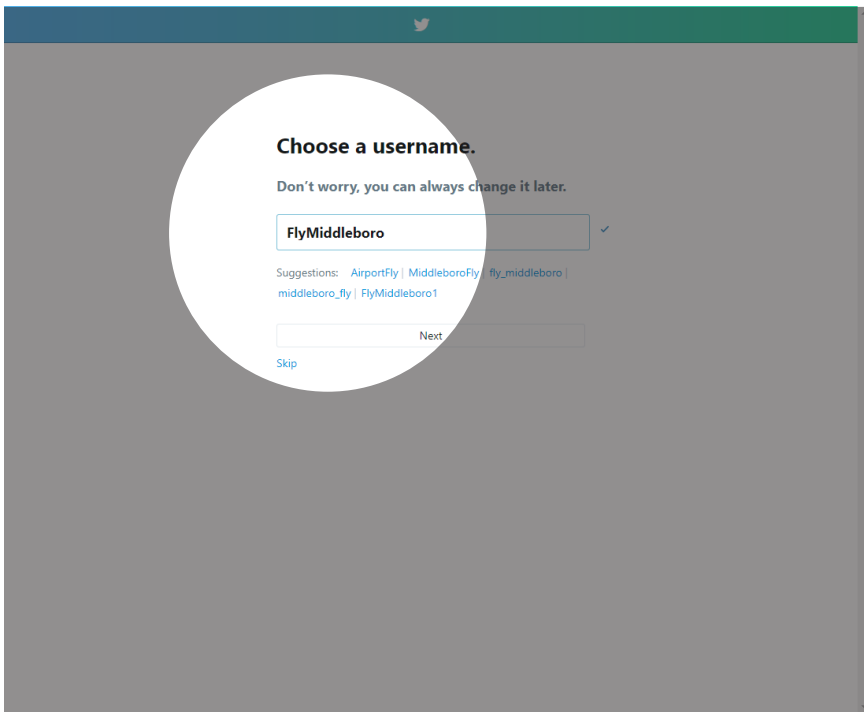
Tip: In case of staff changes, consider creating a new email account to use with social media. Then, forward all messages written to that address to the appropriate person.





3. Enter a phone number.

If you do not want to enter a phone number, skip this step by clicking "Skip." If you do want to, type in the airport office number and click "Next."



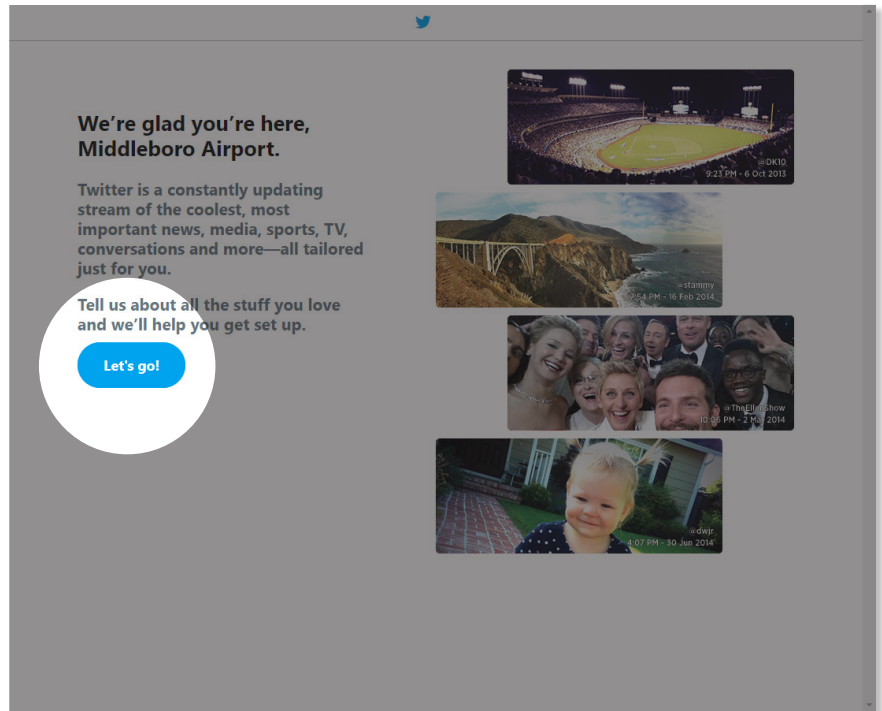
4. Choose a user name.

You may have to try a few alternatives, in case your first choice is already taken. If a name is not taken, you will see a green check mark appear immediately after typing it out.

Tip: People will find your page and tag your airport by this name, so it should be simple and easy to remember. If your airport's name is too long, use a shortened version. Do not use numbers or acronyms—numbers are hard to remember and acronyms are hard to find.

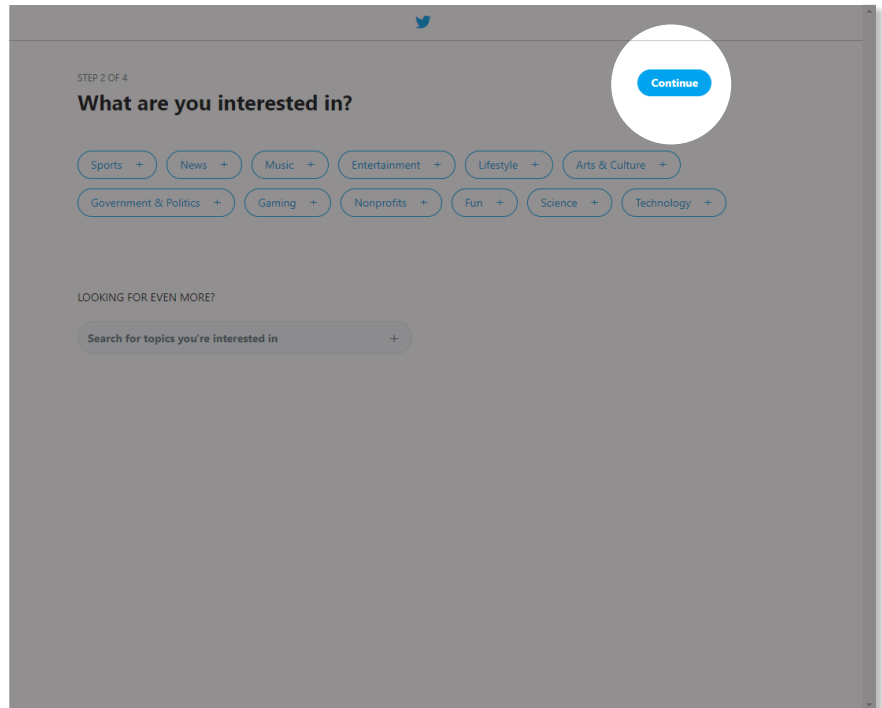
5. Let's go!

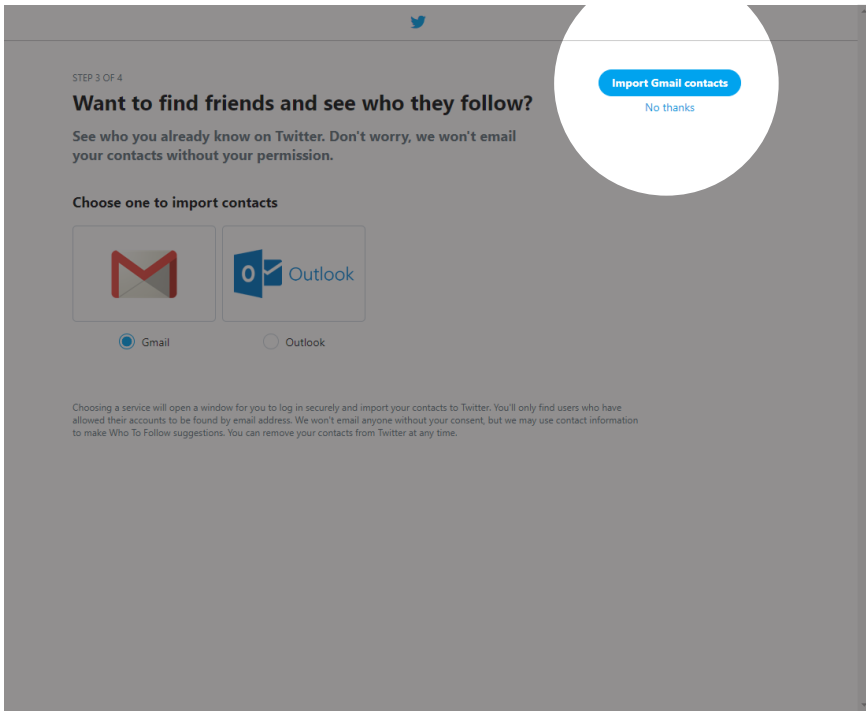
Once you choose a user name, you will see a page welcoming you to Twitter. Click "Let's go!"



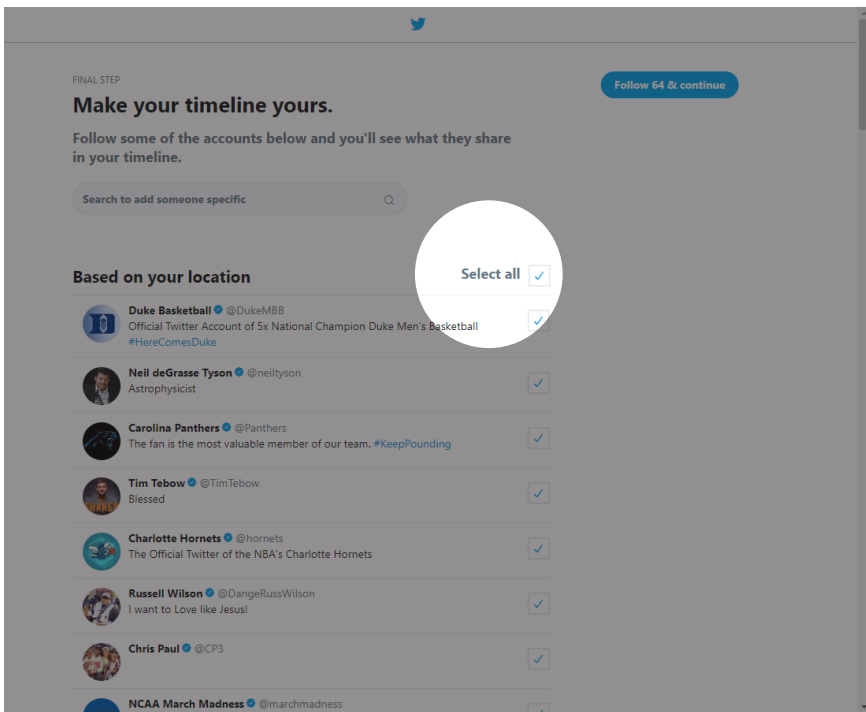
6. Specify your interests.

Hitting "Let's go!" brings you to a page that asks "What are you interested in?" This page is meant to help you find topics or pages on Twitter. You can skip this step by simply clicking "Continue."





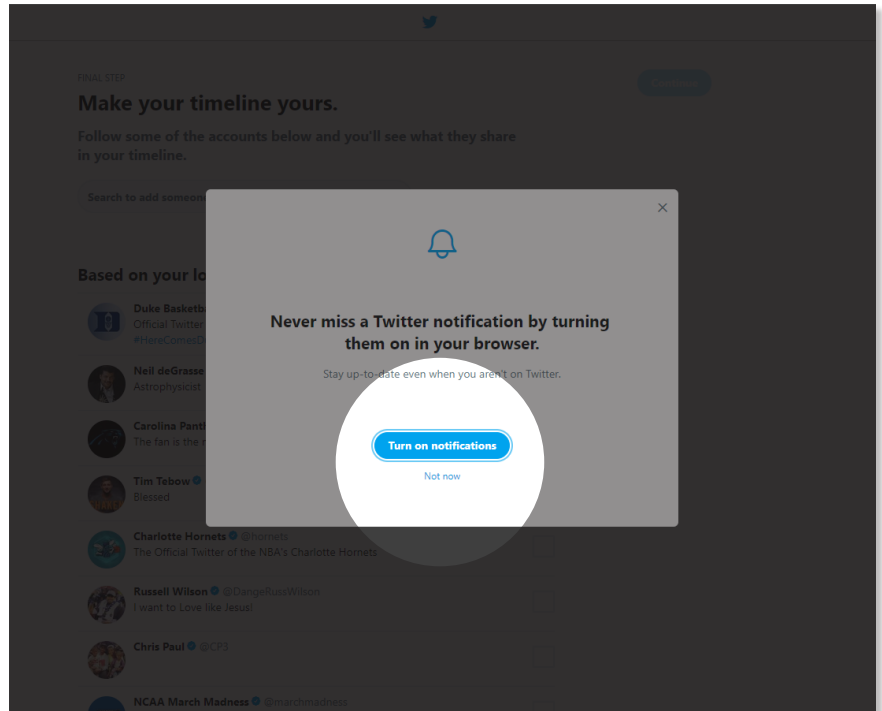
7. Import email contacts. By logging into your email, you can find other people on Twitter. Doing this is not necessary, but it may be useful if you want to have professional contacts on Twitter. If you want to skip this step, click "No thanks."



8. Follow other accounts. This page suggests accounts to follow. By clicking "Select all," you can de-select all the accounts listed and continue to your page.

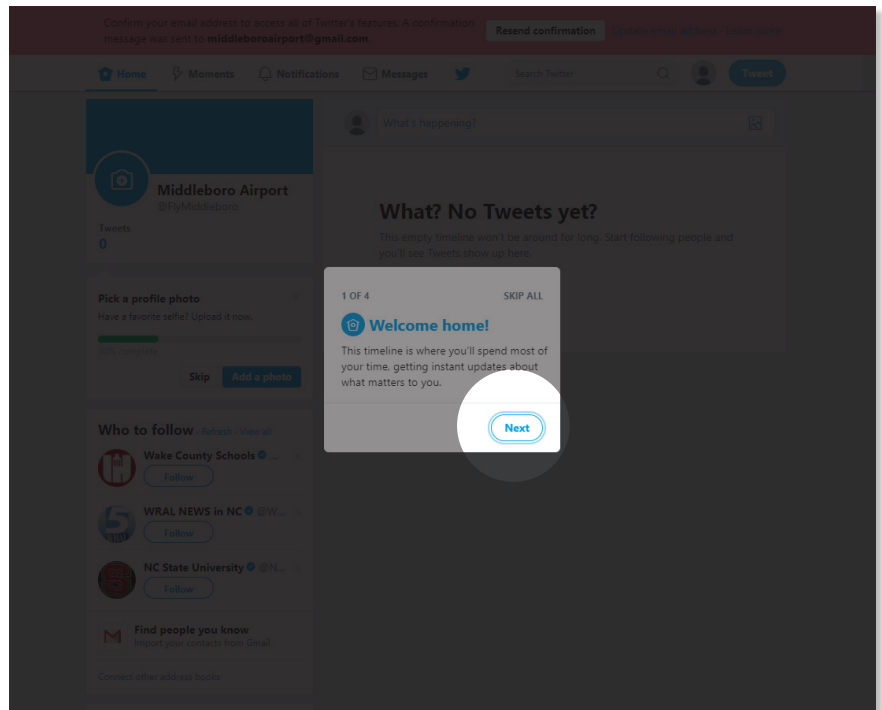
9. Set notifications.

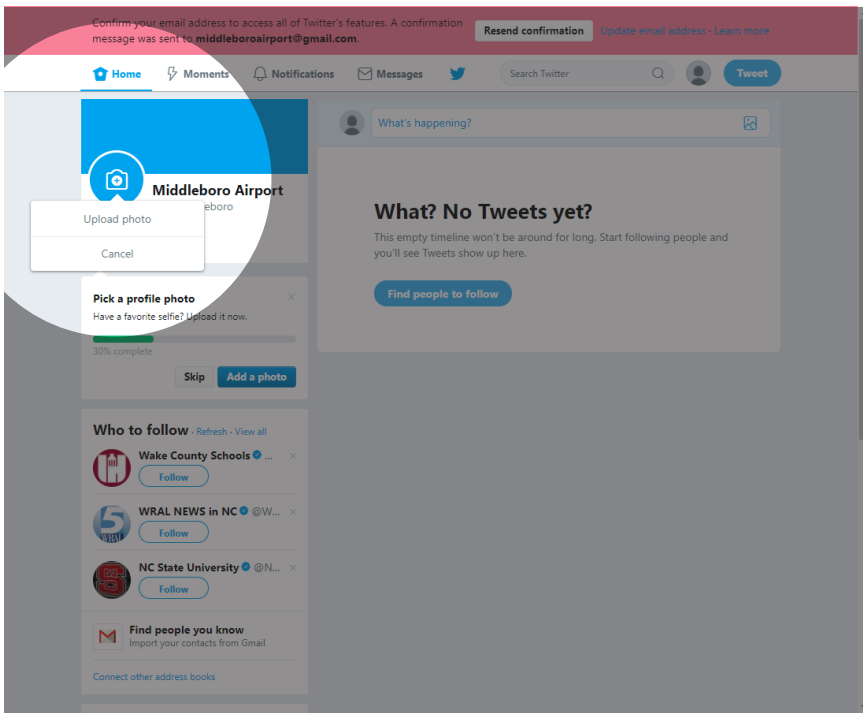
If you want to know about activity on your Twitter page while on another browser tab, turn notifications on; otherwise, click "Not now."



10. Click through Twitter's brief tutorial.

At this point, a series of brief, explanatory windows will appear. Read them by clicking "Next" on each one; or, if you want to skip all of them, click "SKIP ALL."

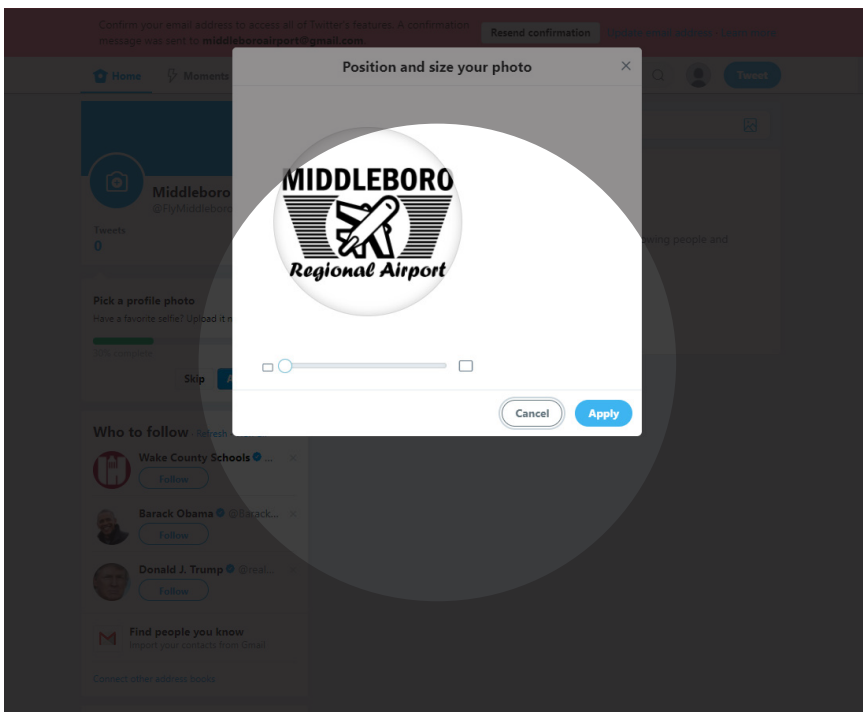




11. Add a profile picture.

Click on the camera icon in the top left of your home page. In the speech bubble that appears, click "Upload photo."

Tip: Use your airport's logo as your profile picture.

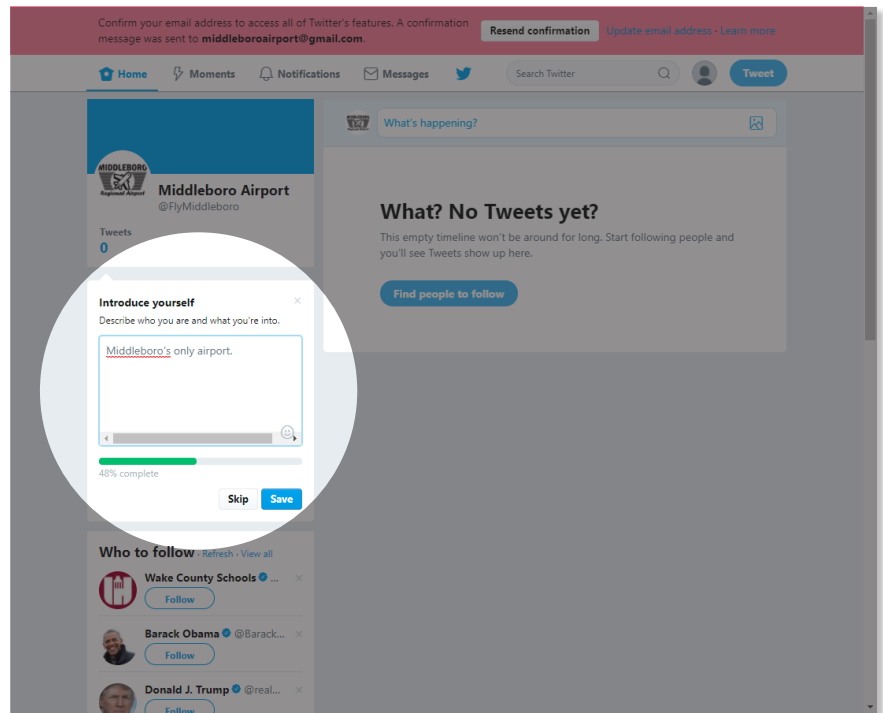


12. Position and size your profile picture.

Once you locate and open an image file, it will appear in a pop-up box that allows you to position and resize your photo. Make sure the whole logo is visible and clear. When it is, click "Apply."

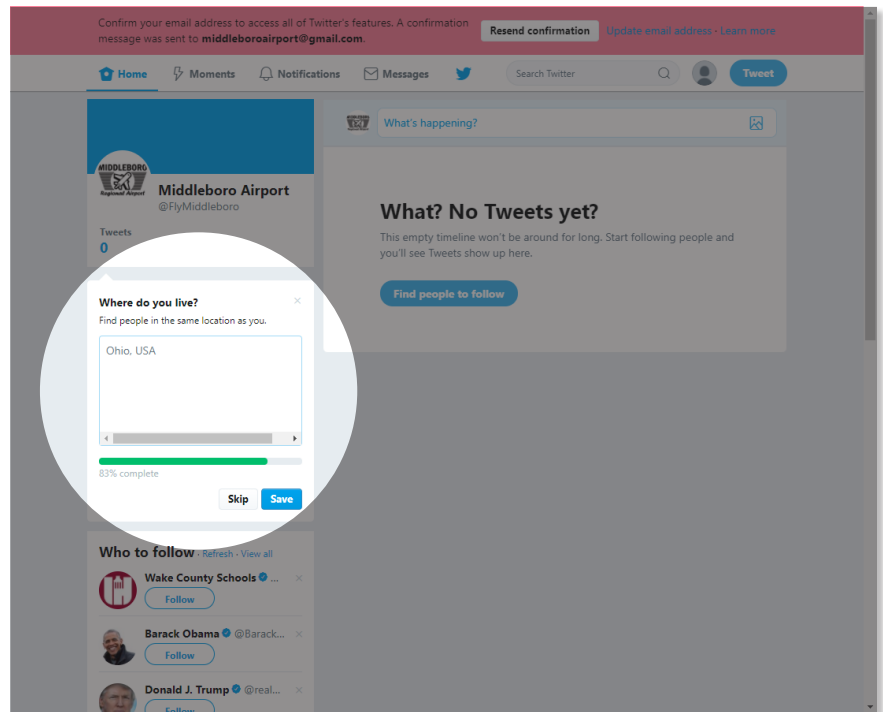
13. Introduce yourself.

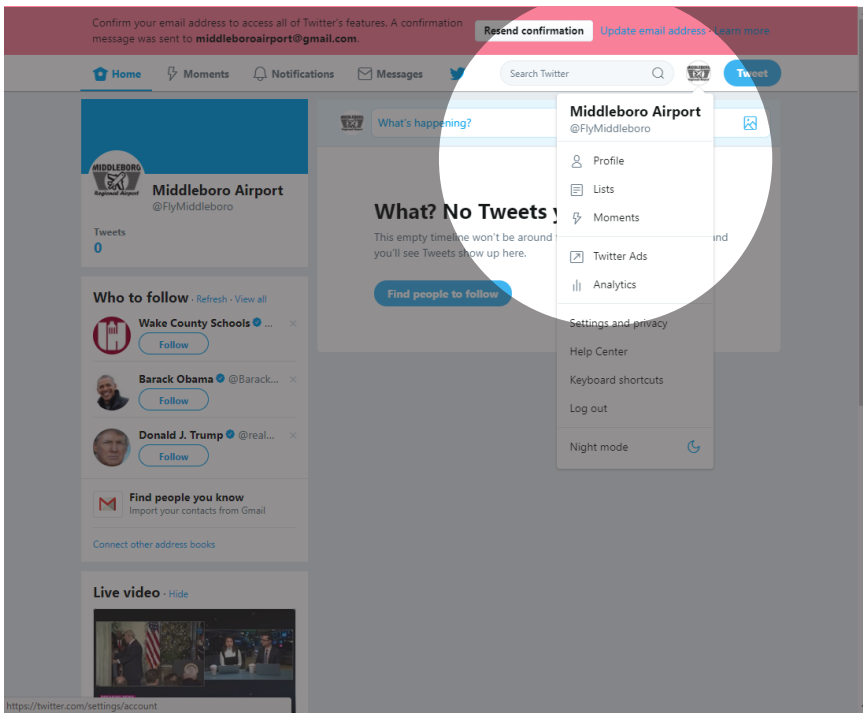
Next, enter a short description of the airport. This is a great way to market the airport services and nearby attractions. Note that your description can be, at most, 160 characters long.



14. Specify a location.

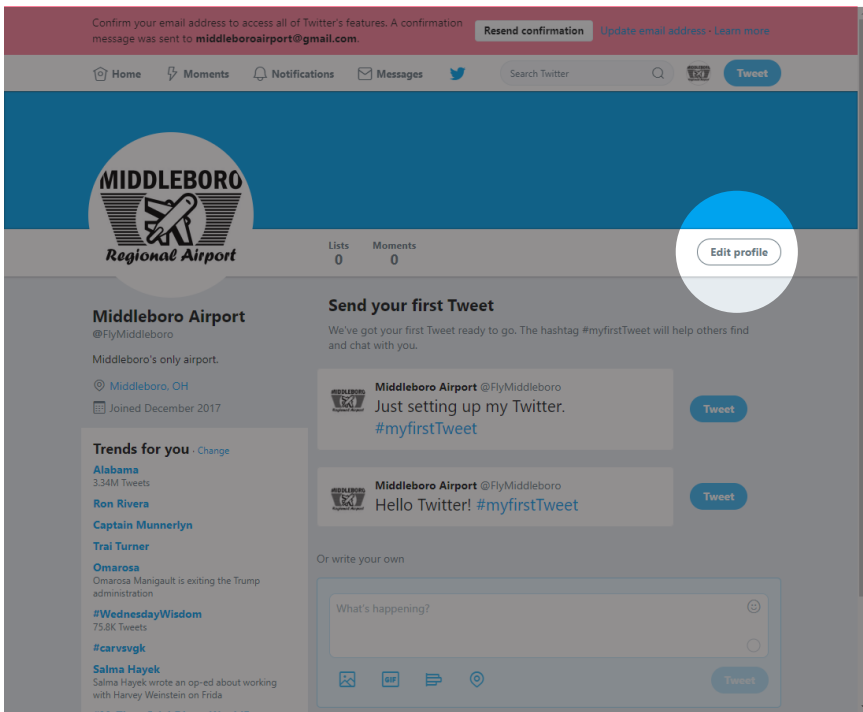
After you introduce yourself, Twitter will ask you where you live. Type in your airport's city or state to facilitate connecting with local people and organizations.





15. Fill out your profile.

Take some time to fill in some other parts of your profile to lend credibility to your account. Click your profile picture in the top right. Then, in the drop-down menu that appears, click "Profile."

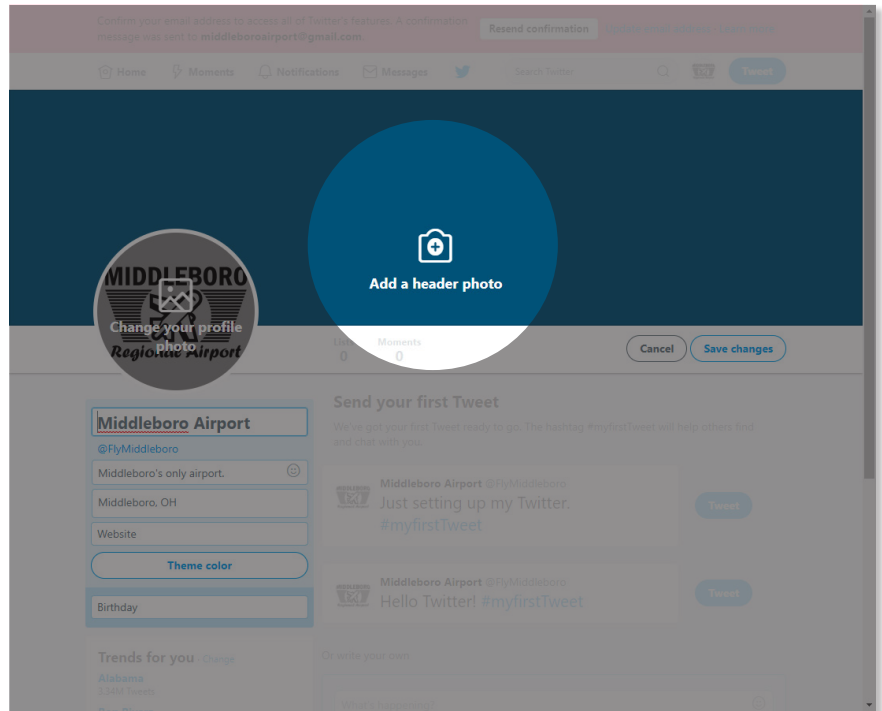


16. Examine your profile page.

You can change a number of settings on your profile page. First, though, you must declare your intent to edit change them by clicking "Edit profile" on the right-hand side of the window.

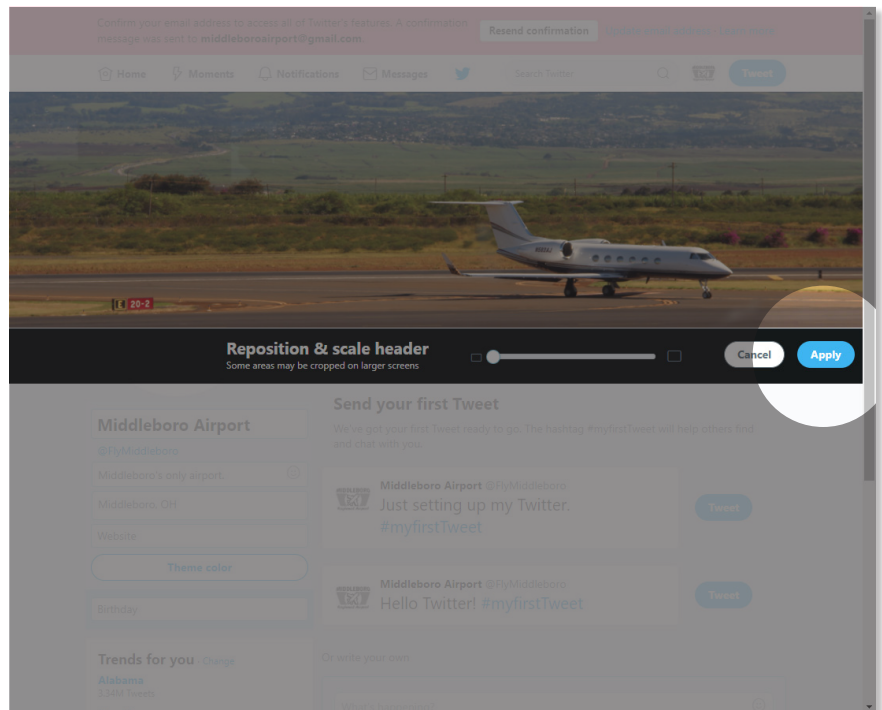
17. Add a header photo.

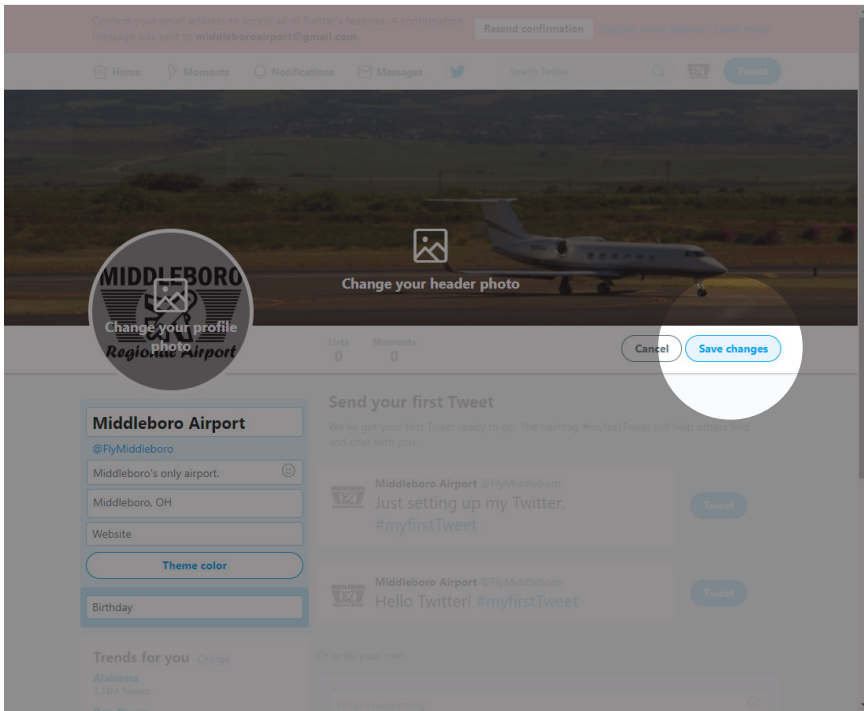
Click the camera icon in the center to "Add a header photo." Upload a clear, professional photo of your airport.



18. Reposition and scale.

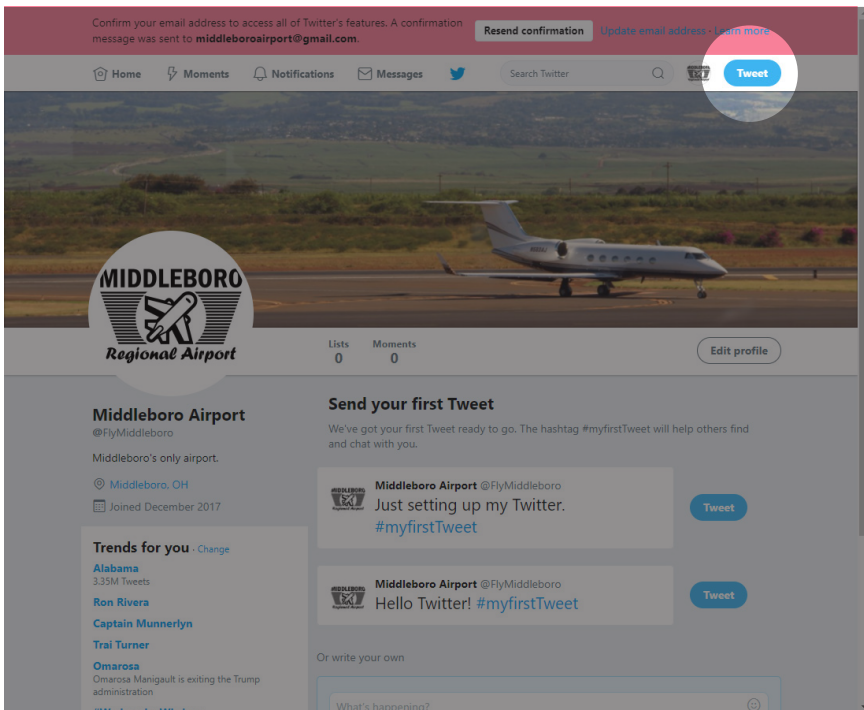
Just as you did with your profile picture, you can now fine-tune your header photo so it fits the frame well. When you are satisfied with its appearance, click "Apply."





19. Finish editing.

Once you have edited all the things you judge to require editing, click "Save changes."

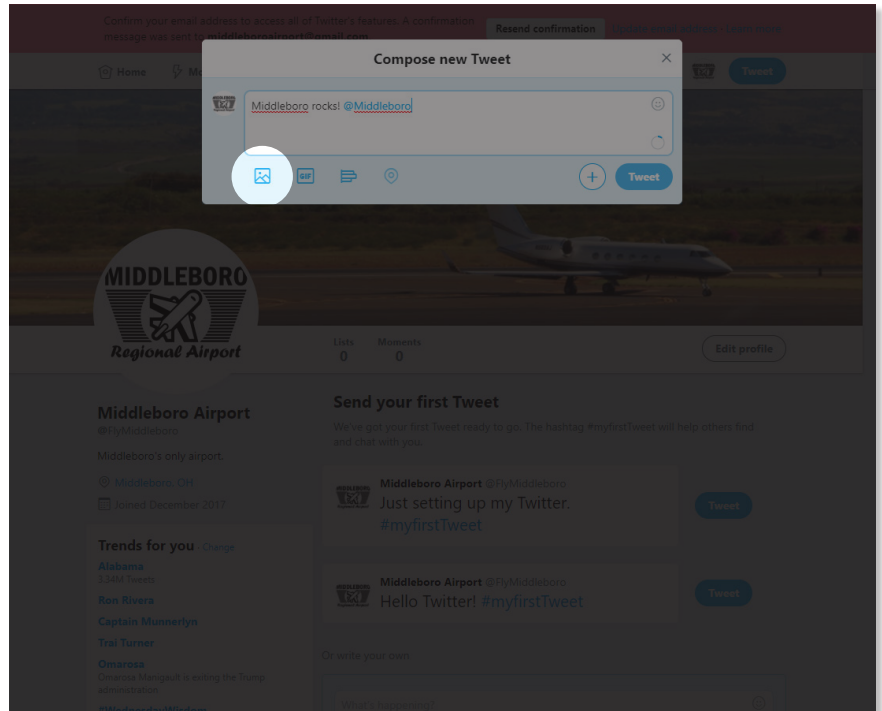


20. Post something!

Back at your timeline, click the button labeled "Tweet" in the top right of the window.

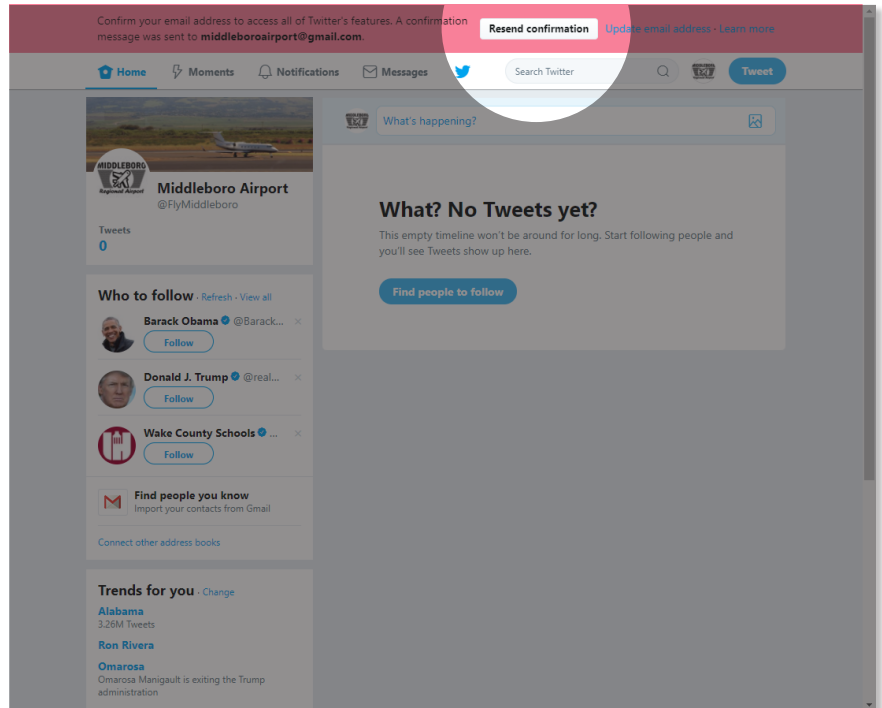
21. Compose a new tweet.

A box will pop up with a text field. To add an image to a post, click on the mountain-picture-like icon in the bottom left. When you've said what you came here to say, click "Tweet" in the bottom right.



22. Get rid of that pink alert.

Before you close Twitter, go ahead and check your email to get rid of that pink alert at the top. Just click the link in the email you got from Twitter, and that will be that.



Press Release Template

[Your airport's logo]

CONTACT

[Name to contact about this story]

[Email address]

[Phone number]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: [date]

Headline (Your Main Point)

SHORT TAGLINE IN ALL CAPS THAT ELABORATES

Extended tagline that elaborates more

City/Town Name, State—What is going on & why is it important? Include the most important information. If you have data put it here. Make sure you are writing in the 3rd person-use the airport name and people's names instead of I/We/Us.

When or where is this important thing happening? Add a few sentences sharing more about your story. Add a quote from an expert or leader that is connected to your story. (Put quotation marks around the quote, and state the name and title of the person whom you are quoting.)

Wrap up with 2-3 sentences that describe any call to action. What are you hoping people will do when they read this news?

For more information on [your airport], please visit [your website].

####

About [your airport]

Add a few sentences about your airport. This is usually your "boilerplate" general information and could include years in service, area(s) served, and/or types of services offered.

Aviation Services

- Passenger
 - Commercial
- Customs / FIS (DH)
 - International Traf
- General Aviation
 - Charter
 - Corporate
 - Leisure / Private
- Cargo
- Military
- Presidential Fleet

There are 72 publicly owned/operated airports in North Carolina (62 General Aviation & 10 Commercial)

Public Airports in North Carolina

The Importance of Aviation

Air services play a pivotal role in driving North Carolina's economy:

- Airports:
 - Stimulate local, regional, and state economies
 - Attract new businesses
 - Create jobs

Airport Facts

- Number of Staff
- Number of Board Members
- Services Offered
- Any other important facts

Download this Powerpoint template at:
go.ncsu.edu/marketingtoolkit