

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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REGIONAL BUSINESS GROUP TO WELCOME CEO OF RDU'S NEWEST INTERNATIONAL AIRLINE

Pedro Heilbron, CEO of Panama-based Copa Airlines, will speak to the attractiveness and opportunity of the Raleigh-Durham market, and the success of "the most punctual airline in Latin America."

CARY, NORTH CAROLINA — The RTA Airline CEO Forum, presented by the Raleigh-Durham Airport Authority, will be held this Friday, April 19th, 2024 from 9 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. at the Umstead Hotel & Spa in Cary, NC. This premier event from the Regional Transportation Alliance business coalition is an opportunity for the regional business community and area partners to hear from the newest airline at growing RDU International Airport.

The RTA Airline CEO Forum event will feature Pedro Heilbron, CEO of Copa Airlines, who will speak of the growth and transformation of the airline and the attractiveness of the Raleigh/Durham market.* He will be joined by Michael Landguth, CEO of the Raleigh-Durham Airport Authority, Ellis Hankins, Chair of the Raleigh-Durham Airport Authority Board, and several members of RTA leadership. More than 150 business, transportation, and elected leaders are expected to attend the forum. Visit letsgetmoving.org/AirlineCEOforum for more info about the event.

"RTA is pleased to continue our legacy of delivering business leadership to get our region moving *faster* via the RTA Airline CEO Forum. The event features Pedro Heilbron, CEO of Copa Airlines, which will launch new international service in June. The business community remains laser-focused on the success of RDU and our growing region."

- Jay Irby, First Citizens Bank, 2024 RTA Chair

"Copa's decision to introduce nonstop service from Raleigh-Durham International Airport to Panama City reflects the dynamic growth at RDU and throughout the Research Triangle region," said Michael Landguth, president and CEO of the Raleigh-Durham Airport Authority. "We are excited to welcome Copa to North Carolina and look forward to connecting our region with opportunities in Latin America and beyond."

"Copa's new Raleigh-Durham route will bring Latin America much closer to the Research Triangle area, strengthening business and cultural ties between our regions. We also hope this new route provides the opportunity for more American tourists to visit Panama and enjoy the wonders our country has to offer."

- Pedro Heilbron, CEO, Copa Airlines

About the Regional Transportation Alliance

The voice of the regional business community on transportation in North Carolina's Research Triangle since 2002, RTA is a metropolitan, private-public partnership that drives consensus and action. More than 100 leading companies work in concert through the RTA alongside more than 25 member chambers of commerce across 13 counties. RTA is a regional program of the Raleigh Chamber. *Learn more at letsgetmoving.org.*

About Copa Airlines

[Copa Airlines](https://copaairlines.com), a member of the Star Alliance global alliance, has the largest international network among Latin America-based airlines. With 85 destinations in 32 countries in North, Central, and South America and the Caribbean, linked via the [Hub of the Americas](https://copaairlines.com/hub-of-the-americas)[®] in Panama, City, Panama, Copa Airlines is the most punctual airline in the Americas and the only carrier from the Western Hemisphere to feature among the top 15 international airlines in the world in Condé Nast Traveler 2023 Readers' Choice Awards.

About the Raleigh-Durham Airport Authority

[The Raleigh-Durham Airport Authority operates Raleigh-Durham International Airport](https://raleigh-durhamairportauthority.com). RDU connects central and eastern North Carolina to the people and places that matter most, serving 14.5 million passengers in 2023. RDU powers our region's economy with a \$17 billion annual economic impact and supports more than 85,000 local and regional jobs. RDU was rated in the Top Five in passenger satisfaction among large North American Airports in a [2023 J.D. Power survey](https://www.jd.com/power-survey).

* Flights starting June 21, 2024, in the Raleigh-Durham region.

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