

FILL 'ER UP!

WE OFFER A FURTHER SELECTION OF AVIATION-THEMED ROADSIDE ATTRACTIONS THAT WERE ONCE COMMON SIGHTS ON AMERICAN HIGHWAYS - PART THREE

BY ADAM STANTON



The cockpit of the KC-97L has been preserved in its original condition. Built as USAF 53-283, when retired the aircraft became part of the Southwest Aerospace Museum in Fort Worth, Texas. Not surprisingly, this enterprise soon failed but rather than being scrapped, the Boeing was disassembled and transported by road to Peterson Field in Colorado Springs where it was converted into "The Airplane Restaurant."



A building has been constructed around the left wing of the KC-97L to allow for more seating, aviation memorabilia, and a close-up view of the mighty Pratt & Whitney R-4360 engine.

I was gladdened by the response from *Air Classics* readers to my two previous installments of "Fill 'Er Up!" The photos and information they supplied has led directly to this third installment of American aviation-themed roadside attractions. As

noted in the previous two parts, these types of advertising were not exactly common but there were certainly numerous examples that dotted the nation's road system and a few still survive today.

These aircraft and the structures

resembling aircraft or airships were eye-catching and I would imagine many a motorist pulled off the side of the road to snap a picture or to sample whatever was being sold. Times have changed and now all we basically have are corporate logos dotting the



Perhaps the most successful of aviation-themed "roadside attractions" is the Boeing KC-97L Stratotanker located next to Peterson Field in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The aircraft was last in service with the Texas Air National Guard (which was the last user of the mighty Boeing) and it opened as a restaurant in 2002 and has been quite successful with good ratings for food and service. The interior has been outfitted with comfortable seating while there is lots of aviation memorabilia on display. For the aviation enthusiast, "The Airplane Restaurant" (you could not get a more simple or direct name) is certainly a worthwhile stop.