

'Miracle on the Hudson' plane preps for final trip

May 21 2011, By DAVID PORTER , Associated Press



Dave Rehmar, left, with US Airways stands near the mangled underbelly of the US Airways jet, flight 1549, as the plane sits outside a warehouse Friday, May 20, 2011, at J. Supor and Sons in Harrison, N.J. The plane that splash-landed in the Hudson River in 2009, making a national hero of pilot Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger, is getting a final once-over before it makes its last journey. Sometime in the next two weeks the plane will be moved to an aviation museum in North Carolina, where it will be put on permanent display. (AP Photo/Mel Evans)

(AP) -- The trays of food that never got served have been removed, along with some of the seat cushions and the mold from dried river mud. Aside from that, the damaged Airbus A320 jet is largely frozen in time from the day it splashed down safely on the Hudson River in 2009 and gave a country reeling from economic calamity something to cheer about.

The US Airways jet has spent the last two years in a hangar just outside Newark at J. Supor and Sons, a company that specializes in large-scale salvage and moving projects. On Friday, crews continued preparations for the plane's final journey, to an aviation museum in Charlotte, N.C., where it will be on permanent display.

The wings of the plane, which are detached, will be moved first, followed by the fuselage in the next two weeks, Carolinas Aviation Museum president Shawn Dorsch told The Associated Press. He said it will take about five days to drive the 120-foot fuselage from New Jersey to North Carolina on a large flatbed truck.

The museum, in the city where [US Airways](#) Flight 1549 was bound on Jan. 15, 2009, reached an agreement earlier this year to acquire the plane.

"We're really over the moon about this," Dorsch said Friday as he watched workmen climbing in and out of the back of the plane cabin via a ladder. "We're not the Smithsonian, so to be able to get something like this is like getting the space shuttle."

Flight 1549 had just taken off from New York's LaGuardia Airport when a flock of birds struck both engines, shutting them down. The pilot, Capt. Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger considered trying to land at nearby Teterboro Airport in New Jersey but quickly realized he wouldn't be able to make it that far, at one point telling the control tower, "We're gonna be in the Hudson."

As passengers and crew lined the wings of the slowly-sinking plane, rescue boats rushed to the scene. The plane was submerged up to its windows when they arrived and managed to save all 155 people aboard.

The museum exhibit is scheduled to open next January and will feature

taped interviews with passengers and crew. Dorsch said many passengers from the flight will be on hand when the plane arrives in North Carolina.

Getting the plane there is requiring a good deal of planning. Toll booths and low overpasses need to be avoided, and Dorsch said the plane may have to avoid the New Jersey Turnpike as a result. A proposed route will take the [plane](#) west from the outskirts of Baltimore bypassing most of Virginia, and then through West Virginia before reaching North Carolina, he said.

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