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Denver International Airport Reflects on 2017

Year Marked by Record Passenger Traffic, Major Milestones

DENVER – Jan. 2, 2018 – With 2017 in the flight log, Denver International Airport (DEN) is reflecting on a year filled with milestones and major achievements. From record-setting passenger traffic and new international destinations, to global awards for excellence and growing facilities, here are the top accomplishments, milestones and memories from DEN in 2017.

Record-Setting Passenger Traffic – Again

In 2016, DEN set a new record for passenger traffic with more than 58.3 million travelers and 2017 is expected to shatter that record – again – with more than 61 million passengers (final numbers will be available in Feb. 2018). The 2017 summer was particularly busy, as July marked the busiest month in Denver aviation history with more than 5.8 million passengers. In total, 76 of the airport's top 100 busiest days ever were set in 2017. And, on May 26, 2017, DEN celebrated its 1 billionth passenger! Compared to its peers, DEN ranks third of the 29 large-hub airports in terms of passenger traffic growth (YTD September 2016-2017) for the year – only Newark and Ft. Lauderdale had higher percentage growth than DEN. For the year to date ending in September, DEN's total passenger traffic growth was 6.2 percent.

New Airlines, New Destinations

DEN's record-setting year was bolstered by new airlines and new destinations around the world. We've worked hard to make DEN attractive to and successful for our airline partners. And it's working, due to our competitive fees, optimal location, growing population, robust economy, exemplary facilities and our commitment to being great partners and presenting them with strong business cases. In addition to welcoming two new airlines in 2017 – Norwegian and Copa Airlines – two airlines also announced service scheduled to begin in 2018 – WestJet and Edelweiss.

Additionally, airlines continued to expand operations and DEN added 10 new destinations in 2017, including:

- Long Beach (LGB) on Southwest
 - Belize City (BZE) on Southwest
 - Pensacola (PNS) on Southwest
 - San Luis Obispo (SBP) on United
 - Providence (PVD) on Frontier
 - Columbia (COU) on United
 - London-Gatwick (LGW) on Norwegian
 - Prescott (PRC) on Great Lakes
 - Panama City (PTY) on Copa
 - Cozumel (CZM) on United
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Other airlines added frequencies to their schedules, including Lufthansa's expansion to serve Munich daily and Aeromexico's decision to fly year-round from Denver to Mexico City. Icelandair also increased its flights to Reykjavik from four times per week to nine times. In terms of international passenger traffic growth, DEN saw an increase of 11.2 percent in international passengers for the year to date ending in September – nearly double the rate of overall passenger traffic growth of 6.2 percent. DEN ranked sixth out of the 29 large-hub airports in this metric.

New Gates Added to Concourse A

On Dec. 15, DEN opened six new ground load gates on the east side of Concourse A. The new gates accommodate narrow-body aircraft up to the size of an A321. The hold rooms at each gate have power outlets and access to DEN's high speed Wi-Fi. In addition, new concessions are planned to open next spring including a Brothers BBQ, Breckenridge Brewery and Snarf's. These new gates will help DEN accommodate the steady increase in airlines, flights and passengers that the airport has experienced over the last several years. And, they will help serve airlines during construction of 39 new gates over the next few years as the airport grows to meet increasing demand from airlines and passengers. The project completed on time and on budget.

Plan For Future Growth

In the fall, DEN received approval for a \$3.5 billion, five-year capital plan that includes growth to accommodate the added passenger traffic, and the traffic projected over the next decade or so. DEN will be modifying the Great Hall (see below) and the sixth floor passenger drop-off curb, adding 39 gates by telescoping out each of the concourses, adding a train set to the train that connects the terminal and the concourses, reconfiguring and widening parts of Peña Boulevard and studying a seventh runway.

Great Hall Development Deal Reached

In December, DEN reached financial close on the agreement with Great Hall Partners – a consortium of Ferrovial Airports, Saunders Construction and Loop Capital – to relocate TSA security and upgrade the Jeppesen Terminal. This is the airport's first public-private partnership. In August, the Denver City Council approved the 34-year, \$1.8 billion development agreement that will kick off construction in summer 2018. The project includes a \$650 million renovation/improvement to the terminal over four years, and a 30-year agreement for the Great Hall Partners to oversee operations of the terminal concessions. The Great Hall project aims to create a new, modern airport experience by relocating and improving TSA security, consolidating and reconfiguring the airline ticket counters, redesigning the shopping, dining and overall passenger experience, while increasing capacity and replacing aging systems. Milestones for the project include finalizing ticket counters in early 2020, opening the TSA security in late 2020, and the entire project will complete with the reopening of the full tented area in late 2021.

Fastest Airport Wi-Fi on the Planet

If you have been on DEN's free Wi-Fi in the last year, you probably noticed it was faster than your home internet connection. In July, the pros at the independent internet speed testing company, Ookla, found that DEN has "the fastest Wi-Fi we've seen at any airport on the planet." That's no small feat, as DEN has invested significantly over the last several years to upgrade its Wi-Fi infrastructure to support thousands of concurrent users with blazing fast speeds. According to Ookla, DEN offers free Wi-Fi with an average download speed of 78.22 Mbps (passengers can download an HD movie in just eight minutes), topping the list of more than 50 major airports tested across North America, Europe, Asia and Africa. DEN previously was listed as the fastest Wi-Fi among U.S. airports by Ookla. Updated testing conducted from March to May 2017 found that DEN's Wi-Fi speed increased by 27 percent.

Financial Stability Reconfirmed

For the first time, DEN reached a milestone \$1 billion in gross revenue in 2017. Additional passenger traffic and increased revenues from concessions and rental cars fueled this revenue growth. The airport's overall financial health was validated by the three rating agencies, which reviewed the airport's five-year capital plan and management, and confirmed the airport's strong ratings. Even with the proposed capital plan, the airport will retain a competitive cost per enplaned passenger to the airlines, as well maintain unrestricted cash equivalent to 500 days of operating costs. This unrestricted cash serves as mitigation for unforeseen future events.

Operational Excellence

Once again, the airport passed its FAA Part 139 inspection with no exceptions. DEN also passed its Title VI non-discrimination FAA audit with flying colors. In addition, the snow team handled 29 weather events, placed at the National Snow Rodeo, and the fleet team moved up the national rankings.

DEN Real Estate Land Use Strategy

With a focus on vistas and access to the natural environment, coupled with development potential and market interest, DEN Real Estate completed a Land Use Strategy to guide the development of approximately 17,000 acres that will never be needed for airport operations. Based on a series of "nodes" located at prime areas of access and visibility, the strategy will preserve open space, provide for express bus, auto and bicycle circulation throughout, and incorporates a passenger service median on Peña Boulevard that will include drive-in services to improve passengers' experiences coming to or leaving the airport.

Therapy Dogs (and one Cat)

Two years ago, DEN launched its Canine Airport Therapy Squad, or CATS program, with 28 registered therapy dogs to roam the concourses and help put a smile on travelers' faces. By fall 2017, DEN had tripled the size of the program with 95 dogs, making DEN home to the largest airport therapy animal program of its kind in the United States. These four-legged companions are a huge hit with passengers from around the world. And, DEN also has three pet relief areas, one on each of the concourses. These rooms provide a clean, convenient place for traveling pets to do their business on the go. All of this added up to the American Kennel Club naming DEN the top airport in the country for people traveling with dogs in 2017. Oh, and in September, DEN added its first actual cat to the CATS team. Xeli, a very special five-year-old female domestic shorthair cat who walks on a leash, now volunteers alongside her canine companions.

DEN Events Returns Bigger and Better

"Events at DEN" continues to bring free, family friendly activities to the airport's plaza outside the Westin Denver International Airport. 2017 saw the return of the popular holiday ice skating rink, which was even bigger than last year, as well as the return of the airport's fall "Beer Flights" beer garden. In June, free miniature golf delighted passengers with a new and improved course, followed by "Colorado Adventures" in August, featuring a zip line, rock climbing wall and virtual fly fishing. Add in a Jazz Festival and the airport's popular "Fly Away Fridays" series of special events, and it all adds up to fun that you never expected at the airport.

Nursing Rooms Delight Traveling Mothers

Life for traveling, nursing moms got a little bit easier in September as DEN opened new nursing rooms on each of the three concourses. The rooms all feature spa-inspired designs with muted colors, lighting and artwork. Furnishings include comfortable seating for nursing and family-friendly seating and space for siblings and companions. Convenient countertops offer baby changing stations, sinks and mirrors. And, the rooms are secured spaces for privacy, with doors that require a code for entry and lock behind patrons. Since opening, moms from around the country have told DEN what an amazing addition these new rooms are to the airport.

DEN ZEN Surprises Passengers

In the fall, the airport took an old storage room and temporarily converted it into the “DEN ZEN” room, where it surprised passengers – to say the least. When DEN invited a group of passengers to just play some football trivia, they were amazed to be greeted by legendary quarterback, and former Denver Bronco, Peyton Manning. Manning signed autographs and took photos, as DEN showed that waiting at the airport can be a lot more fun than you might think. Oh, and then DEN added goat yoga to the room. Yes, goat yoga is a thing. The airport rounded up some passengers in need of some holiday stress relief and surprised them with a dozen baby goats and a professional yoga instructor. The results were, well, baaah-some! It was all caught on video, which you can see and share at www.FlyDenver.com/DENZEN. And, you just never know what’s coming next at DEN.

61st and Peña Blvd. Expands Parking Options

The airport expanded its parking and transit options in April with the opening of a parking lot at the 61st & Peña Regional Transportation District (RTD) A Line commuter rail station. The new lot adds a total of 800 parking spaces to the airport’s extensive parking system, and includes 609 spaces covered by a solar canopy. The energy generated feeds into a cutting-edge microgrid system that connects battery storage and system distribution to benefit all buildings connected to it. The system is part of an innovative public-private partnership at the site that includes Panasonic, and Xcel Energy. The new lot, located on airport property at 6195 N. Panasonic Way, is easily accessible via 61st Avenue and Tower Road and provides air travelers and daily commuters with a new option when taking the RTD commuter rail train to the airport or to downtown Denver. The new parking lot also includes access to 11 new, Level-1 electric vehicle charging stations that are free to use for people who pay to park.

New Airport Welcome Sign Completed

The airport began installation and testing of a “ribbon of light” that greets passengers driving along Peña Boulevard. This new signature welcome sign features Panasonic technology that includes three large format LED signs — each about 768 square feet in size. More than 900 15-foot-tall, thin LED “sticks” are installed in a ribbon shape. The poles change colors in sync with images displayed on the three large LED video boards located on either side and in the middle of the installation. Measuring 18 feet tall and 48 feet wide, with a crystal clear 16mm pixel-pitch, the boards will display messages from the airport and advertisers, while creating a new engaging welcome for tens of millions of passengers from around the world. The ads will generate revenue to cover the cost of the sign.

Food donation program

DEN used a \$20,000 grant from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to expand the airport’s food donation program. The money was used to purchase eight new coolers that will store a growing amount of donated food items from airport restaurants. This incredible program helps connect unsold or unused meals to families in need of a little help. In total, in 2017 airport concessions donated an amazing 113,000 pounds of food (approximately 94,000 meals) to Metro Caring, to support our community – the most yet in a year – and participation is only growing.

Fire Station 35 opening

In January, DEN celebrated the opening of Fire Station 35 – the airport’s fifth on-site fire station and the first one accessible to the public. Located at 25365 E. 75th Ave., near Jackson Gap Road and E. 75th Avenue, the new fire station is the first to be dedicated to responding to public safety events on the airport’s landside properties. The station’s location was selected to provide firefighters with quick access to Peña Boulevard, the Federal Aviation Administration’s radar control center, the Final Approach cell phone waiting area, the airport’s south cargo campus, the Jeppesen Terminal, the Westin Denver International Airport and transit

center, DEN's transit-oriented development at 61st and Peña Blvd. and other structures. In August, the station met LEED Gold certification standards for sustainability.

Airport Carbon Accreditation

For its continued work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and invest for sustainability throughout its operations, DEN was once again been recognized as a certified airport in the prestigious international Airport Carbon Accreditation program, an independent program of Airports Council International-Europe. The program provides a common framework for airports to reduce their climate change impacts, reduce operational costs and improve efficiency. In 2017, DEN demonstrated an emissions reduction of 4.7 percent (19.4 million pounds of CO₂e) from 2015 to 2016. Some of the airport's recent "green" projects include significant upgrades to the central utility plant, retrofitting of older lighting technology to LEDs and reducing the fuel consumption of its fleet vehicles.

Global Awards for a Global Airport

Travelers from around the world voted DEN as the top U.S. airport serving 50-60 million passengers per year, according to the prestigious 2017 Skytrax World Airport Awards. DEN was named the No. 3 best airport in the world serving 50-60 million passengers, making it the highest rated U.S. airport in that category. DEN received several other distinctions, including:

- No. 2 Best Regional Airport in North America
- No. 4 World's Best Regional Airport
- No. 4 Best Airport Staff in North America

But that's not all. DEN also was named the No. 5 best "mega airports" by J.D. Power; the "favorite airport shopping" spot by Trazee Travel; the "best overall airport for dining" by RewardExpert; and the fastest airport Wi-Fi by Ookla; and No. 3 among 50 winners of the "Government Green Fleet Award."

Getting Social

DEN has one of the most popular social media accounts among U.S. airports, with nearly 200,000 followers on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. And, DEN's social media followers and engagement ratings continue to soar. In November, DEN was recognized by Airports Council International-North America as having the "Best Social Media Campaign" for the airport's October 2016 "Conspiracy Month" – which celebrated the airport's longtime conspiracy theories. The airport also provides real-time customer service via Twitter and Facebook.

DEN thanks our passengers and community for their support and patronage this year. Happy New Year from everyone at Denver International Airport!!!

Denver International Airport is the 18th-busiest airport in the world and the sixth-busiest airport in the United States. With 58.3 million passengers traveling through the airport each year, DEN is one of the busiest airline hubs in the world's largest aviation market. DEN is the primary economic engine for the state of Colorado, generating more than \$26 billion for the region annually. For more information visit www.FlyDenver.com, check us out on [YouTube](#), [Pinterest](#), and [Instagram](#), like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#). For current employment opportunities, visit jobs.flydenver.com.
