



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Denver International Airport Celebrates 25 Years of Success and Growth

DENVER – Feb. 28, 2020 – The youngest large airport in the United States, Denver International Airport (DEN), is now officially a quarter of a century old. On Feb. 28, 1995, DEN opened to the public. Twenty-five years later, DEN is experiencing record-breaking growth, has out-grown its original facilities and has become an economic powerhouse in the region. Today, DEN begins a year-long celebration reflecting on the past 25 years and looking ahead to the future.

“Denver International Airport is our gateway to the world – a hub for tourism and business in the region, and the most powerful and dynamic economic engine in the Mile High City and State of Colorado,” Mayor Michael B. Hancock said. “Denver has truly become a global city because of DEN, and I couldn’t be more grateful for all the people who have supported the airport in the last 25 years, from the early visionaries to the thousands of people who work at the airport every day. We have much to be proud of, and much to look forward to in the coming years.”

The vision for DEN was initially met by naysayers, who said an airport so far out of the city would never succeed. Fast-forward to today, and DEN has grown from serving 31 million passengers in 1995 to over 69 million, with nonstop service to over 210 destinations in 14 countries. DEN generates \$33.5 billion in annual economic impact for Colorado and supports nearly 260,000 jobs. DEN has experienced substantial growth in international passenger traffic, serving more than three million international passengers in 2019, solidifying DEN’s position connecting Colorado to the world and Denver’s position as a global city.

When DEN was conceived over 30 years ago, many thought the airport would never reach the original design capacity of 50 million passengers per year. Now, 25 years later the airport has far exceeded the original capacity and is expecting to reach 80 million passengers by 2025 and 100 million by 2035.

While focused on the future and growth, the airport continues to invest in and improve its existing infrastructure. DEN’s \$3.5 billion capital improvement plan will help accommodate current and future growth by increasing gate capacity by 30 percent and reimagining Jeppesen Terminal to be safer and more efficient for passengers. As part of the capital improvement plan, DEN will also improve the passenger experience by updating restrooms and conveyances across the airport, adding more train cars to increase capacity on the train to the gates, providing a variety of shopping and dining options and creating new outdoor spaces on each concourse as well as other passenger amenities.

“The visionaries and implementers who planned and built this airport provided our community an extraordinary asset in Denver International Airport,” said CEO Kim Day. “Over the years, DEN has become a world class airport and today, under the leadership of Mayor Hancock, we continue to be conscientious stewards of the state’s largest economic engine. We will continue to bring more flights, airlines and destinations and remain focused on responsible growth and expansion for the next 25 years. We are committed to being true to the vision and potential of this asset and won’t stop believing in the future of DEN and its continued success.”

At 53 square miles, DEN remains positioned for growth at incrementally lower costs, which will help maintain a competitive cost structure for its airline carriers while keeping up with growing demand. The airport has the space to double its runways and facilities to serve 100 million passengers a year, with an additional 16,000 acres of land available for commercial development. This land represents one of the most compelling real estate opportunities in the world. With non-aviation revenue generated by DEN’s commercial real estate program, the airport can reduce airline operating costs in Denver, increasing regional economic benefits and generating new passengers – all of which should result in more flights to more cities.

[If you would like to receive Denver International Airport’s 25th Birthday Press Kit, please click here.](#)

[Watch DEN’s 25th birthday video here.](#)

History of Denver International Airport

DEN replaced Denver's former Stapleton International Airport, which had exceeded its original design capacity and was plagued by flight delays, noise issues and an inability to expand. After locating a new site for what would become the newest and most modern airport in the world, the groundbreaking for DEN was held on Nov. 22, 1989.

Construction was a mammoth undertaking. At its peak, 300,000 cubic yards of dirt were moved daily to prepare the new site for construction, for a total of 110 million cubic yards moved – approximately one-third the amount moved during the Panama Canal project. C.W. Fentress - J. H. Bradburn Architects designed the iconic tented roof structure known around the world for evoking the nearby Rocky Mountains. Nearly 2.9 million cubic yards of concrete were used to construct DEN's six runways (the sixth runway was completed in 2003), taxiways and aprons.

On Feb. 27, 1995, more than 100 aircraft, 13,000 vehicles and 6,000 rental cars were relocated to the new airport in just 12 hours. DEN's first departure was United Airlines Flight 1062 to Kansas City, and the first arrival was United Airlines Flight 1474 from Colorado Springs. On opening day, DEN accomplished the world's first triple-simultaneous landing using the most sophisticated aircraft control tower in the country.

Denver International Airport vs. Stapleton International Airport

	Denver International Airport	Stapleton International Airport
Annual economic impact	\$33.5 billion (2020)	\$3.1 billion (1984)
Jobs supported (direct and indirect)	259,000 (2020)	140,000 (1984)
Total annual passengers	More than 69 million (2019)	33.1 million (1994)
U.S. ranking for passenger traffic	5 th (2019)	6 th (1994)
Average Daily Flights	1,700 (2020)	1,400 (1994)
Number of Airlines	23	18
Size	53 square miles (largest in U.S., second-largest in the world)	7.3 square miles
Number of destinations	More than 215 (2019)	Approx. 95
On-airport land available for development	16,000 acres	0 acres
Master Plan design capacity	12 runways, 100 million passengers	6 runways, 25 million (no ability to expand)
Runway capabilities	4,300-foot runway separations with ability to perform triple-simultaneous landings in inclement weather	900- and 1,600-foot runway separations with no ability for simultaneous landings in inclement weather
Airport employees	About 34,000 (2020)	About 21,000 (1994)
On-airport parking spaces	More than 40,000	About 5,000
Average domestic airfare	\$300.04 (national average \$343.00)	\$348.22 (national average \$291.86)

Denver International Airport is the fifth-busiest airport in the United States. With more than 69 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 \$33 billion for the region annually. For more information visit www.FlyDenver.com, check us out on [YouTube](#) and [Instagram](#), like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#).
