



Richard E. Hrabko
Director

LAMBERT-ST. LOUIS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT®

City of St. Louis Airport Authority

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Francis G. Slay
Mayor
City of St. Louis

October 1, 2009

Dear RCGA Members,

These have been challenging days for airports, airlines, and passengers. Recent developments suggest that more difficult days are ahead. The economy has forced American Airlines to take drastic measures to keep solvent with the fallout hitting St. Louis far more than any other community the airline serves.

Lambert-St. Louis International Airport will see the loss of 46 American flights between late November and the summer of 2010. The airline has adopted a new business model that wipes out what is left of a once dominant hub operation. The airline's plan will ultimately feed 36 flights a day to nine airport destinations: Boston, Washington Reagan National, Dallas-Fort Worth, Los Angeles, New York LaGuardia, New York JFK, Miami, Chicago and Seattle.

No doubt, this is another big hit for St. Louis and all of our businesses. However, I want the community to be aware that Lambert-St. Louis International Airport is more than just American Airlines. Lambert currently operates 270 flights a day from 13 airlines. If all the flight cuts bear out, our travelers will still be able to fly non-stop to more than 50 destinations, which is still better than other airports our size.

What some of the news accounts may have failed to report is that American Airlines made these moves to shore up its own financial health. Our travelers were filling the seats on many of the flights that will soon be cut. Destinations like San Diego, San Francisco and Las Vegas were showing load factors above 80 percent on American Airlines flights. This is why we believe that other airlines will pick up some of the lost service that American will cut next year. Since, and before, American's announcement, we have been in talks with numerous airlines about the opportunities to serve this market. St. Louisans will not stop flying because of American Airlines' drawback.

These talks are not new. Lambert actually began its first ever marketing program two years ago. We talk, meet and pursue new and expanded air service every day. The marketing program is already paying off with recent announcements by three air carriers adding flights in the coming months: Southwest to Minneapolis and Boston, Frontier to Cancún, and the launch of Midwest Airlines with three flights a day to Milwaukee. Later this year, we will launch a business-to-business marketing campaign that will directly target airlines, cargo companies and other aviation related businesses to invest or expand in St. Louis.

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This marketing campaign has been supported and shaped by key contributions from regional business leaders and groups like Civic Progress, the RCGA and Regional Business Council. We also made a commitment to share the challenges we face and seek input on solutions through a continued dialogue with the business community and a recently formed Airport Business Advisory Group. This volunteer group is represented by some of the regions' largest corporations that have extensive travel requirements for their employees.

The recent events highlight how critical Lambert is to the economic vitality of this region. The Airport can't stand alone in the mission to land more flights and more non-stop destinations. Lambert needs a strong business community to thrive; local businesses need a strong airport to grow as well. We welcome your help and continued support.

Sincerely,


Richard E. Hrabko, AAE
Director of Airports