

Air Transport Association Forecasts Marginal Decline in Heavy Summer Demand

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Airlines, Airports and Government Have Plans for Smooth Travel and Minimized Delays - Soaring Fuel Prices Create New Challenges for Struggling Industry

The Air Transport Association of America (ATA), the industry trade organization for the leading U.S. airlines, joined by Airports Council International-North America (ACI-NA), today released its summer forecast and steps that passengers can take to help ensure a more enjoyable travel experience.

ATA forecasts that slightly fewer passengers* will travel June 1 through August 31 compared to the same period last year. Approximately 211.5 million passengers are expected to fly this summer, down approximately 1 percent from the 214.2 million passengers who traveled during the summer months of 2007.

"For a variety of reasons, slightly fewer people will fly this summer and planes will be approaching 85 percent full," said ATA President and CEO James C. May. "While New York remains a chokepoint, airlines, airports and government are doing all they can to avoid lengthy delays when possible and to provide a pleasant travel experience for all."

"We know that summer travel can be stressful for passengers and airports are well organized to handle unexpected schedule changes or delays," said Greg Principato, ACI-NA president. "We will work closely with the airlines and the Transportation Security Administration to ensure safe and smooth operations for travelers. In the case of delays, airports will help to provide a full range of business and leisure services to meet passenger needs."

Record-high jet fuel prices, a weakening economy and airline capacity cuts are the main reasons for the reduction in the number of passengers, still airplanes will be flying with relatively full loads. And, with the cost of jet fuel approaching \$170 per barrel, airlines will be taking every conceivable step to minimize delays and improve operational efficiencies.

"Unfortunately, uncontrollable factors such as bad weather can disrupt the best airline efforts," said May. "To help ensure smooth flying, we encourage passengers to check their flight status and check in online before leaving home, allowing for plenty of time at the airport for security and check-in processing. Working together we are doing our best to make this summer travel season better than last."

**The total number of revenue passengers boarding aircraft in scheduled service.*

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