

# Airport report

## A Promising Year for MSY and Greater New Orleans

**By Iftikhar Ahmad**  
Director of Aviation

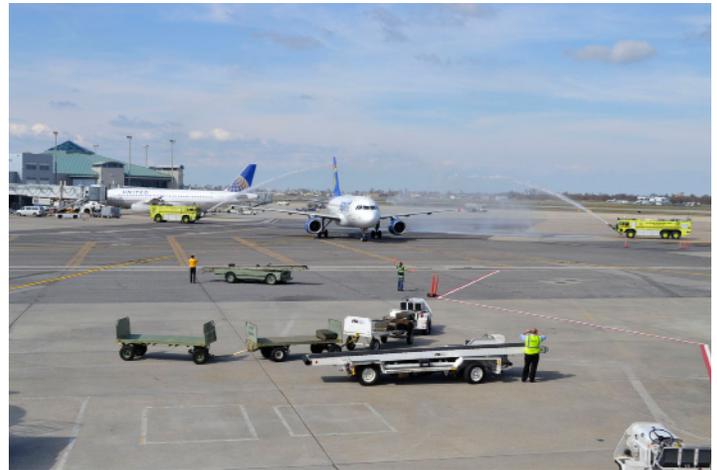
This is the month the New Orleans Aviation Board has been anxiously awaiting for quite some time. It marks the conclusion of our multi-year terminal modernization program with an investment of over \$300 million dollars and the beginning of the next possible phase of development at Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport.

Last month, we were pleased to showcase the final results of our capital improvement program at a formal open house. The many architectural firms and contractors were recognized for their contribution to the 14 projects that composed the program and the new food service and retail concessions were on display. After the ceremony, the food and beverage master concessionaire Delaware North Companies provided a “taste in the terminal” with samplings from each of their new restaurants they have opened at the airport. If you have not been at the airport recently, let me encourage you to visit to see all of the changes. While you are here, plan to indulge in a tasty meal at Dooky Chase’s Restaurant near Concourse C and then browse the select Saints merchandise in the Saints Store located near Concourse B. Make it a date night at MSY. We welcome your visit.

As you can see, our amenities have grown and so has our air service. Last month, Spirit Airlines began their inaugural non-stop service to Dallas Ft. Worth on January 24 with an Airbus A319 (145-seat aircraft). The new daily flight departs New Orleans at 1:35 p.m. and arrives at the DFW airport at 3:05 p.m. The carrier departs Dallas at 11:20 a.m. and arrives in New Orleans at 12:45 p.m. Spirit is an ultra-low-cost carrier with service to over 50 destinations in the U.S. and this is their first entry into the New Orleans market. This airline is an excellent addition to the other nine carriers that serve the airport who are American Airlines, our international carrier Air Canada, Air Tran Airways, Delta Air Lines, Frontier Airlines, JetBlue Airways, Southwest Airlines, United Airlines and U.S. Airways. I trust their maiden entry into our market will be a successful one. It is encouraging how our air service has remained on an upward trajectory when compared to many other markets. This can be attributed in large part to our position as a top leisure destination. In fact, thanks in part to the Super Bowl and other upcoming events, Orbitz Insider Index has named New Orleans the top

destination internationally for the travel site’s 2013 predictions. Jerrold Broussard, New Orleans destination expert and regional director for Orbitz Worldwide was quoted as saying, “We expect 2013 to be a banner year for travel in New Orleans thanks to a diverse lineup of events, new hotels in the Garden District and major airlines adding nonstop service.” Another reason airlines are considering our market is their potential to operate with a profit. A determining factor in adding or beginning air service at any airport is the airport’s cost per enplanement (CPE) or the cost an airline pays to fly a passenger from an airport. Thanks to the action by the New Orleans Aviation Board, the rate at Armstrong International has been significantly reduced from \$10.20 in 2009 to \$8.41 today.

As we look ahead, everything is pointing to the year 2013 as being a banner year for our airport, our city and our region. ✈



**SPIRIT AIRLINES ARRIVAL AT MSY**



*Iftikhar Ahmad, director of aviation for Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport may be reached at [director@flymsy.com](mailto:director@flymsy.com). You can follow the airport on Facebook at [facebook.com/MSYAirport](https://www.facebook.com/MSYAirport) and Twitter @ [NO\\_Airport](https://twitter.com/NO_Airport). Also, view “Airport Alive” on the airport website, [www.flymsy.com](http://www.flymsy.com).*

***Want to be a volunteer at the airport? To find out how, click on Ambassador on the airport website.***