

Airport report

Important Endorsements and Rankings for MSY

By Iftikhar Ahmad
Director of Aviation

I am pleased to announce that the Southeast Baton Rouge/New Orleans Super Region Committee has unanimously endorsed the new Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport Terminal Plan at their meeting in June. The first endorsement of the plan was from the Baton Rouge Area Foundation (BRAAF) and the second endorsement was from Greater New Orleans, Inc. (GNO, Inc.). The GNO Inc. and BRAAF resolutions both stated support for New Orleans Mayor Mitchell J. Landrieu, the New Orleans Aviation Board (NOAB), the oversight authority for the airport, and Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport management in their collective decision to construct a new terminal for the airport on the north side of the existing property. The resolution was passed in consideration of:

- The importance of a world-class airport to flight connectivity and brand, and hence economic development;
- The marked improvement in management and governance of the Airport; and
- The comprehensive analysis performed to determine the value maximizing strategy for the future of the Airport

Founded in 2009, the Southeast Super-Region Committee (SRC) is an unprecedented partnership between the Greater New Orleans and Greater Baton Rouge regions. The committee is composed of Greater New Orleans, Inc. and Baton Rouge Area Chamber board members whose mission is to foster cooperation for mutual benefit between the regions.

The endorsements refer to the new airport terminal design presently underway that was announced by New Orleans Mayor Landrieu and the NOAB on April 17, 2013. On this date, Mayor Landrieu joined the board members of the NOAB, and regional elected, business and tourism leaders to announce plans to build a brand new, \$650 million state-of-the-art airport terminal on the north side of the current airport property. The announcement came less than two years after the Mayor requested the New Orleans Aviation Board to undertake an in-depth and robust analysis of four proposals for the future of the Armstrong International Airport from the airport's master plan. The support of this committee signals a regional spirit of cooperation that will be necessary for the ongoing success of this project.

In other airport news, I am pleased to announce that a new MSY passenger enplanement ranking for U.S. Flights has been reported by the federal agency, Research and Innovative Technology (RITA)

Administration Bureau of Transportation Statistics. RITA's summary data released on June 21, 2013 has for the first time ranked Armstrong International #38 among 827 U.S. airports in enplanements and #39 in arrivals. The ranking period took place over a 12 month period that ended March 2013. Before Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans was ranked #40 among the nation's airports. After the storm, the ranking dropped to #56.

In addition to the RITA good news, our new refurbished airport food court has been named a winner. Food Republic.com has named Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport among the six (6) best airport food courts in America. The other airports selected among the best are: Chicago: O'Hare International Airport, Salt Lake City International, Los Angeles International Airport, Atlanta: Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport and New York City: John F. Kennedy International Airport. The website explores the new culture of food through stories, interviews, global conversations and experiences inspiring happier living and better eating for everyman. Featured in the New Orleans spotlight was the new Dookey Chase Restaurant, a New Orleans' restaurant landmark named for founder Leah Chase, known as the "Queen of Creole Cuisine". The new restaurant is one of eight new eateries constructed in time for the 2013 Super Bowl in New Orleans. Finally, Moody's Investor Services has recently affirmed the A3 rating on the NOAB's general airport \$220 million outstanding revenue bonds with a stable outlook. The stable outlook is based on Moody's expectation that the airline use and lease agreement will be renewed in a timely manner, enplanement levels will continue to grow and return to pre-hurricane Katrina levels over the next several years and that capital improvement costs will not excessively encumber airport general revenues.

As the NOAB and staff continue to work to improve Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport, it is encouraging to see that our efforts are being recognized by regional organizations and national public and private entities. ✈



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