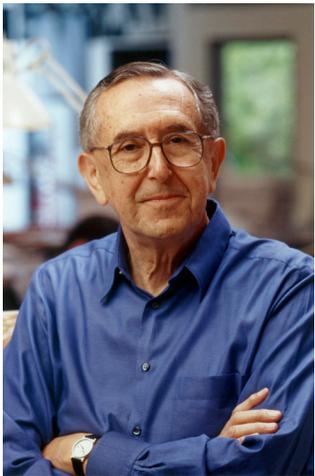


# Airport report

## A World Class Designer for a World Class Airport

**By Iftikhar Ahmad**  
Director of Aviation

In a few short months, the New Orleans Aviation Board will be debuting the exciting look of the new \$650 million Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport North Terminal. We have been actively working on the design of the terminal envelope since July, the same month that we were pleased to announce that famed architect César Pelli and William Raymond Manning of Manning Architects had joined the Crescent City Aviation Team (CCAT), the group charged with shaping a world class airport terminal in New Orleans set to open ahead of the 300th anniversary of New Orleans. They will bring a vision and world class experience to the project that is uniquely New Orleans.



Mr. Pelli is known locally for his work with Dr. Norman Francis, President of Xavier University, to design the St. Katherine Drexel Chapel at Xavier University, a project he completed free of charge. On an international scale, Mr. Pelli is known for his extensive writings on architectural issues in the form of books and issues of professional journals dedicated to his designs and theories. The award winning architect has received the Aga Khan Award of Architecture for the design of the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Other

award-winning projects designed by him include the San Bernardino City Hall in Bernardino, CA; the Pacific Design Center in Los Angeles; and the United States Embassy in Tokyo, Japan. His airport terminal work includes the widely recognized TWA Terminal at JFK in New York, the Washington National Airport Expansion and the new Airport Terminal at Winnipeg, Canada. A major reason for selecting Mr. Pelli is his avoidance in design of formalistic preconceptions and his belief that the aesthetic qualities of a building should grow from the specific characteristics of each of his projects such as its location, its construction technology and its purpose.

Since July, a series of meetings and milestone work sessions have been taking place to reach an approved design concept for the building envelope and interior. The purpose of the meetings is to provide the opportunity for an interactive dialogue between the Airport and

stakeholders with the design team, with a meeting goal to establish a clear understanding of the project development and allow direct input to the design process. At the meetings, the design team prepares a series of exhibits, intended to depict progression of the design elements and design alternatives. The sessions have been to date conducted in a highly interactive manner, generating mark ups, sketches and diagrams, to be used to further the design process. Items discussed in these sessions have included terminal area functional and operational flows, terminal plan refinement, terminal exterior mass and envelope refinement, and terminal interior space refinement. The solicited feedback in the meetings from participants is used by the design team to further refine the design. The challenge given to the design team from the beginning has been to achieve a “New Orleans aesthetic” for the interior and exterior of the airport. At this stage from what I have seen, I believe the challenge is on the way to being met.

In other news, last month vacationexpress.com wrapped up their seasonal direct service to Cancun, Mexico from our airport and were very pleased that the summer venture was a rousing success. The weekly non-stop flight was aboard Aero Mexico which departed and returned each week on Sunday. In addition to new flights and new destinations, I am pleased to announce that Armstrong International Airport was selected to debut a new aircraft on August 1. American Airlines chose MSY to be the location for the inaugural flight of their new regional jet aircraft – CRJ175. We celebrated its arrival on the established non-stop Chicago route with a water cannon salute and a New Orleans welcome for their passengers with Mardi Gras beads and refreshments. The new jet seats more passengers than the former aircraft which is resulting in a continued increase in enplanements at our airport.

This year we are finally beginning to reap the rewards from the hard work our Aviation Board and staff have been doing. Our past accomplishments have served as building blocks for all of the good news that I have been pleased to share with you this year. I look forward to what tomorrow will bring. ✈



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