



## **Armstrong International Airport Third Fastest Growing Airport in US**

October 14, 2008 -- NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA -- According to a recent Aviation Forecast Report by the Boyd Group International, a leading aviation industry consulting firm, Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport is positioned in a positive light for recovery despite uncertainty in the airline industry and the economy. In the report, Boyd analyzed 147 airports with a focus on population, economic factors, airline service trends and extraordinary local factors. The forecast places Armstrong International as the third fastest growing airport in the United States.

The report studied three airport categories; Hubsites, i.e., airports where an airline has dedicated resources to inter-connect passengers, Large Non-Hubsites – large metro airports where no airline predominantly inter-connects passengers, and Regional Airports – mid size and small airports that are primarily dependent on the hub system for access to the air transportation network. In this report, Armstrong International is a Large Non-Hubsite. These categories in the forecast encompass over 96% of all U.S. enplanements.

According to Boyd, the airline industry is uncertain for 2009-2010. This is based on the fact that US carriers essentially have no significant new airliners on order, are engaged in reducing their fleets, the economic downturn in the country, and the decline of discretionary dollars. Capacity reductions, not falling demand by consumers, will be the initial drivers in falling enplanement numbers, at least in the next 12 months. Some US Airports anticipate capacity reductions as great as 15%. Looking Long-Term 2012 – 2014, there are no factors that indicate strong air traffic spikes. Traffic is expected to grow consistent with GDP, around 2% - 2.5%. Traffic drivers to watch include the price of oil, a slowing economy, low-cost carrier expansion and fleet shifts up or down to service consumers.

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Between 2008 – 2014, Armstrong International enplanements are expected to grow 9.5% behind San Antonio, TX and Lexington, KY respectively. Director of Aviation, Sean Hunter said, “This report confirms what our studies have shown. The Greater New Orleans Metro area has been in a recovery mode since Hurricane Katrina, while the rest of the nation has been in a downturn. This has been a factor in the resurgence of passenger loads. Also, New Orleans is still a popular destination, particularly with the special events we present like the Sugar Bowl, Mardi Gras and JazzFest. Based on airline schedules posted for December 2008, we will have an increase of 7% in available seats over December 2007. In addition, Boyd forecasts 2008 enplanements for our market will be 4.3 million, a 15.5% increase and by 2014, enplanements should be 4.7 million.” Enplanements are approximately half of total passengers, so the projected total passengers in 2014 will match or exceed pre-Katrina levels.

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