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# Passenger Traffic On The Rise at The Eastern Iowa Airport

By George Ford, Reporter



Barry White of Cedar Rapids, an information specialist at the Eastern Iowa Airport, mans the information desk on Friday, May 20, 2011, in Cedar Rapids. The desk was moved into the center of the waiting area to provide easier assistance to passengers during the upcoming terminal upgrade project. (Liz Martin/SourceMedia Group News)

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Story Created: Aug 27, 2012 at 3:47 PM CDT (Story Updated: Aug 27, 2012 at 3:47 PM CDT )

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa — Passenger traffic is picking up at The Eastern Iowa Airport with expanded service to Atlanta and Denver.

On March 2, Delta Air Lines added a second daily flight between The Eastern Iowa Airport and Atlanta's Hartfield International Airport. The airline took the action after its daily flight was operating at about 88 percent of capacity.

Delta had 11,864 passengers flying from Cedar Rapids to Atlanta in July, up 18.8 percent from 9,989 passengers making the trip in July 2011. In the first seven months of 2012, Delta has recorded 72,466 passengers flying from Cedar Rapids to Atlanta, a 23.4 percent increase from 58,708 in the same period of 2011.

Frontier Airlines, which launched nonstop service on May 17 with four weekly flights between Cedar Rapids and its Denver hub, has added a fifth weekly flight. The airline flew 2,072 passengers in July and 4,584 so far this year.

Frontier competes with United Express, which serves Cedar Rapids with more early morning and late evening daily and Sunday flights. Business travelers prefer to fly out early in the morning and return in the evening, allowing them to work a full day at their destination.

Passenger traffic, including charters, was up 15 percent to 44,909 from in July from 39,039 in the same month last year. For the year to date, passenger traffic is up 12.9 percent to 286,873 travelers from 254,127 in the same period of 2011.

Airport Director Tim Bradshaw said more seats are being offered by the airline this year, with the increase in capacity attracting passengers. Bradshaw said the upward trend in passenger loads is

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not being felt in the industry, which is still recovering from the impact of the recession.

Passengers are noticing changes in the terminal at The Eastern Iowa Airport as the airline ticket counters have been relocated to the west end of the building. Airport Operations Director Sara Mau on Monday said a new baggage-handling system will likely be operating well in advance of the holiday travel season.

Mau said installation of the \$4.4 million system and new Transportation Security Administration baggage inspection machines is running ahead of schedule. The new system will remove the baggage screening process from the terminal lobby, where it was installed after 9/11.

Travelers will take their luggage to the ticket counter and leave it there, rather than having to take it to another area for inspection. Airline personnel will place baggage on a moving conveyor belt that will carry it to screening machines in a secure area of the terminal.

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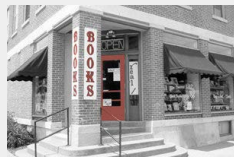
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