

# Denver International Airport: The Primary Economic Engine for Colorado



A strategic location, strong airline competition and a robust local economy—these are the three main reasons Denver International Airport (DEN) has fared the recession better than many other major airports in 2009. DEN is the fifth busiest airport in the US and the 10th busiest in the world. With over 20 airlines serving 161 nonstop domestic and international destinations, DEN continues to grow in importance not only as a major domestic hub but also as an international gateway into Denver, the Rockies and the natural and historical treasures of the Western USA.

During the recession, DEN has seen real growth in the number of connecting passengers, proof positive that passengers and airlines alike favor the convenience of DEN as a connecting hub, not just for the domestic market, but also for Canadian and Mexican travelers. Located close to the geographic center of the United States and the foot of the Rocky Mountains, we are the largest hub in a 500-mile radius, have ample room for expansion and offer a very convenient passenger flow—all aspects that make DEN a very attractive airport for both passengers and airlines.



While passenger traffic at DEN this year will fall slightly short of 2008's record-breaking 51.2 million passengers, 2009 saw the airport's busiest month ever in July, and the busiest month of August in DEN's history. We've also already seen some very positive developments at DEN in 2009 that we believe will continue to exert a positive effect on the travel market in Denver into 2010: our home carrier, Frontier, emerged from bankruptcy this autumn to remain a viable and strong competitor here at Denver International Airport; and Southwest and United have expanded their route networks out of Denver, increasing choice for travelers while also making ticket prices for our passengers more competitive.

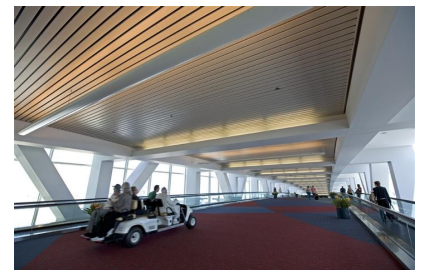
The City of Denver has also fared the recession better than most US cities in terms of unemployment and other economic indicators. Denver is a dynamic and sophisticated city of around 1.3 million

inhabitants that enjoys one of the most diversified economies in the US. Denver also has a highly educated workforce, a housing market that hasn't been hit as hard as elsewhere in the country, and the Rockies at its doorstep. As the airport's routes network expands, US and international companies are increasingly interested in moving their headquarters and operations to Denver and Colorado.



What are our challenges ahead? Just ahead of its 15th anniversary in February 2010, Denver International Airport is poised for the next phase of development and expansion. As the newest major hub airport in the United States, we are fortunate to already have very modern infrastructure in place. Denver International Airport generates over \$22 billion in annual economic impact for the city of Denver and state of Colorado and is the primary economic engine for the state, so expansion and improvements must balance current and future needs to ensure that DEN remains a competitive and strong gateway for the city, state and region.

Our 53-square-mile site provides us with ample space for the expansion of both aviation and non-aviation facilities. Denver International Airport is the only commercial airport in the US with room to double its existing six runways into 12 and also add more concourses and terminal space.



Concrete investment in infrastructure for 2010 includes breaking ground on a Westin Hotel slated to have 500 rooms, a spa and conferencing and event facilities. The hotel is one element of the South Terminal Redevelopment project, which will include a train station for the new FasTracks light rail line that will connect the airport with the downtown Union Station. Connecting the airport with the public transport rail system is vital to DEN remaining a competitive and modern hub at an international level. The South Terminal Redevelopment project also plans for a plaza with shops and restaurants to be built a level above the FasTracks station as well as changes to the existing Jeppesen Terminal to reconfigure it to better suit how people will be travelling in the future.

By **Erica Gingerich**

<http://www.flydenver.com>

Date: 2009-12-28

Article link:

<http://www.tourism-review.com/travel-tourism-magazine-denver-international-airport-the-primary-economic-engine-for-colorado-article1069>