

DFW Airport Books Largest Travel Week since September 11

Thanksgiving travelers total 1.3 Million -- 84 percent of normal traffic levels

More than 40,000 use free parking offer -- Web site traffic climbs 44 percent

DFW International Airport, Texas - Buoyed by strong travel demand, great weather and few delays, DFW Airport recorded its strongest travel period since September 11. During the Thanksgiving peak travel period from Monday, November 19 through Tuesday, November 27, DFW Airport served more than 1.3 million passengers, and produced four of the biggest travel days since the September 11 terrorist attacks.

And the majority of those travelers found the going easier than expected at DFW, as indicated in the Airport's passenger survey from early November that reported 91 percent of guests spent less than 10 minutes navigating metal detectors and bag checks. DFW credited its 17 security entrances spread across four terminals for keeping lines short, and a large cadre of Airport volunteers and Ambassadors who assisted travelers to keeping the lines moving quickly.

"We are strongly encouraged by the resolve of the American people to return to the skies this holiday season. And we are very pleased that the work we did to make their holiday travel experience as pleasant as possible paid off for our guests," said Jeff Fegan, CEO of DFW Airport.

"The recovery of the aviation industry is still under way, and there's much work still to be done. We'll continue to be cautiously optimistic with the December holiday season on the horizon," Fegan said.

Not only was the Thanksgiving week the strongest since September 11, the Airport reported that the four busiest travel days since September 11 all occurred from November 21-26:

1. Wednesday, November 21	157,000
2. Saturday, November 24	148,000
3. Sunday, November 25	175,000
4. Monday, November 26	165,000

The passenger count was stronger at DFW Airport than at many other airports around the country, when compared with last year's Thanksgiving travel period. At several other major airports around the country, traffic was down 20-30 percent, while DFW's traffic was down just 16 percent.

DFW credits its strong operational rebound over the first major holiday period since September 11 to strong demand for flights on its two hub carriers, American Airlines and Delta. Both airlines have restored a number of flights initially thinned after September 11, and service to several new destinations from DFW will offer holiday travelers new getaways over the upcoming winter months. Delta for example is expanding its new service from DFW to Pensacola, Florida effective December 1. The additional Pensacola flights come just one month after Delta began service to this new Florida destination. Delta will also initiate first ever DFW-Tallahassee service effective January 1, 2002.

"We've added great new service to key Florida destinations. These new cities represent our 128th and 129th non-stop destinations and we are hopeful to add more," says Joe Lopano, executive vice president of marketing at DFW Airport.

During the Thanksgiving travel period, DFW Airport rolled out the largest holiday initiative in its 27-year history, offering discount parking, live entertainment, shopping coupons, children's toys and old-fashioned rocking chairs to travelers, many of them getting on airplanes for the first time since September 11. More than 200 Airport employee volunteers and Airport Ambassadors also roamed the terminals, assisting travelers with security and ticketing questions while preparing them to go through security checkpoints or finding them the shortest line. The volunteers also distributed newspapers and stress balls to adults and slinkys to children to help ease the strain of travel and help people re-focus on the fun of holiday travel.

More than 40,000 visitors took advantage of a free one-hour parking offer, which allowed those meeting friends and family at DFW additional time to find a place to park and sample new concession items now available on the public side, near ticket counters and baggage claims.

DFW Airport also found that more travelers were checking ahead, taking advantage of the useful information on its Web site, www.dfwairport.com. Traffic on the Airport's Web site jumped more than 44 percent during the travel week as the Airport debuted a real-time "question & answer" feature dubbed ASK DFW and offered the latest security rules, parking updates and flight tracking information.

"We think the increased Web site traffic occurred because people learned that checking with our Web site will make their trips easier," Fegan said. "We've made the Web site both traveler-friendly and user-friendly, and our customers found that especially handy during the busy Thanksgiving holiday period."

The busiest Web traffic day occurred November 20, when nearly 8,000 visitors came to the site as they began their trips. ASK DFW averaged 259 browsers daily, with the majority of inquiries focused on parking and new checked and carry-on baggage requirements. Questions were answered within one hour, 98 percent of the time. The holiday Q&A will remain on the front page of the Web site through January 1, 2002.

"We will continue to update and inform our guests of changing travel rules and regulations as the holiday season continues," says Fegan. "We were also extremely gratified by the positive feedback we received on the Web site. We did everything we could to make our guests feel safe and make their travel more comfortable and convenient and even less stressful."

An e-mail message received by the Airport exemplified that customer feedback:

Dear DFW Airport-

Thank you so much for the wonderful music you provided. I have not seen that many smiles ever at the Airport. During this time of holiday fun mixed with sorrow because of the recent events, this gesture was so thoughtful and very well received.

*You made my day!
Kate M. -- Dallas, TX*

The Airport is already devising its plans to help December holiday travelers. Programs are being developed for additional volunteer deployments and special promotions and activities that will begin in mid-December.

For the latest media information, go to www.dfwairport.com.
To arrange interviews: Ken Capps, kcapps@dfwairport.com, Tina Sharp, tsharp@dfwairport.com or 972-574-NEWS