

Touching Ground

FALL 2004 • VOLUME 7 • ISSUE 4

AT THE DES MOINES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Airport Assumes Important Link in Election Process

The "Road to the White House" clearly runs through the Des Moines International Airport. The Airport and its service providers, which include Signature Flight Support and the Iowa Air National Guard, are providing an integral link in providing the presidential candidates and the incumbent President of the United States the gateway to Iowa voters in the hopes to swing the political pendulum their way as Iowa establishes itself as a key "swing" state in the November 2 election.

The teamwork of all the entities of the Airport in bringing candidates is a finely fitted piece of tapestry that reflects the faith the White House Advance Groups, National Press, and the national and local campaign groups have in bringing them here and keeping Iowa first in the political process across the Nation. It starts early with the candidates visits, builds up through the caucuses, continues through the respective conventions, right up to election day. As of November 1, we have had 43 total visits combined from President Bush, Vice President Cheney, Senators John Kerry and John Edwards.

The process starts with a last-minute communiqué from the United States Secret Service (USSS) with details for the upcoming visit. Coordination between USSS, the entities at the Airport (like Signature, Iowa Air Guard, etc), Airport Operations, local law enforcement, and the Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) are critical. Security might be compromised if everyone knows what to expect or the events become too routine. So, the rule of thumb for planning is often a matter of preparing for the expected while expecting the unexpected.

There is always the routine runway sweeps, lockdown of the gates securing the Airport perimeter prior to arrival and departure, closing of air space and traffic routes based on the VIP's position in the air or on land. But, other



Craig Stephens, Operations Officer, meets President Bush.

But, other matters of moving aircraft on the apron, setting up press areas, relocating fuel trucks and ground support equipment, maintaining open communications lines, providing secure rooms for candidates, and controlling the movement of people in all areas is in a constant state of change.

Darrel Marshall, Manager of Signature Flight Support here at the Des Moines International Airport, explains how his crew of over 30 employees over a 24-hour/7-day week is taxed beyond the call of duty during campaign visits.

"What sticks with you is the incredible amount of personal sacrifice put forth by the people that take an intense interest in the role this airport has in these events. People who work over fifteen hour days and are back in at 0600 in the morning the next day. Everyone does his or her best regardless of political affiliation. Although challenging

mentally and physically, they realize their role is important to the process."

Marshall said after the Iowa Caucuses alone, his staffing had to be increased by 300% to accommodate the mass exodus of media, candidates and staffs. Timing is an issue in regards to departure to separate the different party contingents. He says his operation will include parking, providing air stairs, passenger and crew services, loading/unloading passengers bags and equipment, facilitating ground transportation, lavatory and portable water service, cleaning and catering. He points out that some of the requests from our VIPs can often be as complex as they are candid. It is not a matter of if it is possible to get it done, but just "do it!" Many of his and all Airport employees make sure they accommodate the special requirements of these visits, but also maintain the routine scheduled airline, air cargo, and general aviation customers are attended to like normal. Often times this is a very complex logistical situation when you consider for example that when the President flies in, separate, individual aircraft brings in the motorcade vehicles and press corps.

Yes, it requires a Herculean effort on behalf of the whole Airport team, from the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) personnel on down to the Field Maintenance Crews, which are on stand-by to address needs as they arise.

Marshall concludes, "Clearly, one of the greatest assets this Airport has is the consistent support and teamwork everyone brings to our airport community. It is a culture at Des Moines that other airports envy. It is an honor, a responsibility, and a service to our Country that we do not take for granted, and take a measure of pride in."→



Senator Kerry leaves DSM International Airport

MARCH TO A MILLION

June was the highest enplanement month ever for the Airport, recording more than 92,000 passengers boarding planes in Des Moines. Coupled with de-boardings, the Airport saw over 184,000 passengers course through the terminal that month. Through the end of September, we are almost 70,000 enplanements ahead of last year's record pace. If we maintain this pace, Airport officials project we will reach our one million-enplanement milestone in late December for the first time in Airport history.

If you are familiar with bigger airports, these numbers don't seem too impressive. But, when you consider the population of our primary catchment area (from where we traditionally get our passengers) is about 500,000, you realize we are getting everyone almost twice. Or, in industry lingo, 200%! There, now that adds some perspective to it.

What the heck is going on? Well, almost every commercial airport in the country is showing traveler increases, with many regaining pre-9/11 levels. People seem to be traveling more often by air pretty much everywhere, but we are still performing at a level not seen here before.

As with any business, the more customers you have, the more competitive you can be

with your prices. The better the prices, the more customers. It is truly a testimony to our partner carriers for keeping the fares down and making the "Do the Math" marketing initiative really work!

Of course, more passengers produce customer service enhancements to make their experiences here nicer. That pretty much means they will come back. I hope everyone has been watching and listening to the local news and reading the paper, as the media has been very good about covering all the good news at the Airport.

What's next? Well, 1,000,000 of course. Beyond that we are going to start educating everyone on the **power** they have when they buy a plane ticket. I've used the term before. It is called an **enplanement**. That is the "gold standard" in this industry. It shows the community's ability to put people on planes. It is what airlines look at when they are contemplating expanding or adding service.

You have seen the current carriers who serve this airport increase and improve their route services lately. They can do this because more people are using their services. If we continue to increase usage, we will see these airlines continue to increase our choices and improve their services. The best scenario is that our

current lineup of carriers can, and will, provide all our service needs. But, there is another angle to this: If our needs cannot be met by those already on property, **our enplanements are the single biggest factor that another airline will look at as they consider coming to town.**

That's what is meant by **power**. If the community wants another carrier to come to this market, the community must send that carrier a message: **You have to come to Des Moines to get my patronage and money.** As long as people continue to drive to another city to board a plane, that airline will never come here. They don't care how far you drive to give them your money. This is, after all, a business. Why should they come to you if you are willing to go to them?

This is the essence of our new initiative. **Stop giving away your power. Invest your power here.....at Home!** →

Rededication of Iowa Tuskegee Airmen Memorial

On Saturday, July 24 at 2 p.m., many dignitaries, key military personnel, and many distinguished guests were proud to be in the company of four of the original Tuskegee Airmen as the memorial commemorating their valiant service was rededicated at the Iowa Air National Guard Base at the Des Moines International Airport. The fiberglass shell of the P-51D Mustang with its classic "Red Tail," is a monument of valor to these black airmen. The airmen first flew armed reconnaissance missions attacking targets on the ground, and then were assigned to escort and protect bombing operations during World War II. During a period shackled with unwarranted racism, the story of these brave heroes is significant in the light that they were fighting two wars at the same time.

The original dedication was on November 9, 2002, but the monument hadn't been

erected at that time. The ceremony was in conjunction with the ceremonies associated with the opening of the Fort Des Moines Memorial Park and Education Center. The festivities included a fly-by of a real P-51D Mustang. Lt. General Russell C. Davis and Congressman Leonard Boswell spoke on the significance of the unit's role in the war and to the impetus they provided in changing mindsets in the United States Military. Scholarship candidates were introduced and Captain Luther Smith had the audience mesmerized with his anecdotal



Iowa Tuskegee Airmen Memorial Rededicated July 24, 2004.

speech of the airmen's experiences. →

Airport and Airline News

- The Airport is refurbishing nine passenger-loading bridges. The \$1.3 million upgrade will provide for safer, more secure connections to the Regional Jets (R.J.'s), provide a new power supply to maneuver the bridges, new carpet installation, and extensive cleaning.
- Northwest Airlines announces an addition of a third daily Memphis non-stop flight from Des Moines International Airport as of October 31. This will make three daily flights to Memphis, four to Detroit, and nine to Minneapolis.
- America West Airlines will replace the 50-seat Regional Jets they are currently using for their daily, non-stop flights to Phoenix with an 86-seat Canadian CRJ-900. Reservations can be purchased now for the service that will start February 11, 2005.
- The Airport has opened three new computer stations for passengers who've chosen not to bring their laptops to the airport. One is in the Terminal Business Center, the second is in the terminal lounge, and the third is in the upper level restaurant on the concourse/gate side of the security checkpoint. All are connected to the Airport's Wi-Fi system for rapid Internet connectivity at the same wireless connection rates offered on our website at www.dsmairport.com
- Every gate has been equipped with a new "Kid's Table," stocked with some quiet games and activities for the kids to keep busy with while they are waiting with their guardians for flight departure.
- In the Annual CityView and Business Record publication of "The Best of Des Moines," United Airlines was selected as Best Airline. America West and American Airlines were also mentioned as great airline options out of the Des Moines International Airport as well.➔

Airport Employs State-of-the-Art Control System

The Des Moines International Airport is one of a select group of airports across the country chosen to implement the new Standard Terminal Automation Replacement System (STARS). This \$2.1 million air traffic control system is the centerpiece of the Bush administration's plan to upgrade control equipment that dates back to the late 60's. It promises to reduce delays and increase safety at the airport.

"In air traffic control, we just went from propellers to jets with this system," said Ed Carroll, Asst. Air Traffic Control Manager for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) at the Airport. Aviation Director, Bob Hagener, agreed that the system is quite an improvement over the 60's version. "The system, that has been in use since March of this year, enhances radar information so



Air traffic control tower with new STARS system.

controllers can take data from up to 16 radar systems and combine them to develop a more accurate picture of sky activity, quickly projecting an aircraft's path and arrival time," said Hagener. "The digital color radar provides more detailed weather information to help route planes around storms." Karan Bhatia, Asst. Secretary for Aviation and International Affairs for the U.S. Department of Transportation, on hand for the unveiling of the new system at the press conference on June 22 said, "With this sophisticated software, technology has given controllers information on aircraft and weather at the touch of a keyboard!" Another feature of the system is its backup capability that keeps operating even if there's a malfunction

in one part of the operation. The system can also help with security. For instance, it can map out the limits of restricted air space like for the recent presidential visits on Air Force One. Bhatia said Des Moines was one of the first 20 airports selected because of its mix of aircraft-passenger planes, private planes, cargo and military jets. Also, the sharp increase in air traffic here warrants attention. Altogether, the joint FAA and Department of Defense program will upgrade air traffic control at more than 300 civilian and military facilities nationwide within the next seven years at a cost of \$1.7 billion. Des Moines is fortunate to be on the cutting edge of this system employment and it will reap many dividends for the Airport and central Iowa travelers.➔

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Airport 2 Parking Adds Parking Spaces and Options



Airport officials have announced another customer service choice for passengers at the Airport. Customers can now save money on parking when they "Choose the 2."

The new Airport 2 Parking Lot is located on the east side of Fleur Drive, just south of the Holiday Inn. It was previously used as an "overflow" parking

destination, but is now available for use anytime. A new, lighted sign designates the entrance off of Fleur Drive.

The lot is fully automated, lighted and secure. The payment machines will take cash or credit cards. The credit card software uses state of the art technology. The maximum charge for a full day is \$3.50, making it the best "deal" for parking in the vicinity of the Airport. The Airport lot will be able to accommodate 859 vehicles. Shuttles will ensure prompt delivery to the Terminal. For a detailed, updated map of the current parking facilities and parking options visit the Airport's Website at dsmaairport.com/Parking Information.➔