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AMERICAN
ECONOMY

U.S. Department of Transportation
Bureau of Transportation Statistics
Washington, D.C.
www.bts.gov

Research and Innovative Technology Administration
BTS Data

BTS 28-06
Thursday, June 15, 2006

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March 2006 Airline Traffic Data: First Quarter System Traffic Up 0.3 Percent From 2005

U.S. airlines carried 0.3 percent more domestic and international passengers and flew 4.1 percent fewer flights on their systems during the first three months of 2006 than they did during the same period in 2005, the U.S. Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) today reported, in a release of preliminary data (Table 1).

BTS, a part of DOT's Research and Innovative Technology Administration, reported that the airlines carried 176.1 million system passengers during the first quarter of 2006, up from the 175.5 million carried during the same period in 2005 (Table 2). The passengers were carried on 2.56 million flights, down 4.1 percent from the 2.66 million flights operated in the first quarter of 2005 (Table 1).

U.S. airlines carried 66.4 million system passengers during March 2006, down from the 66.9 million carried during March 2005. The passengers were carried on 905,000 flights, down 4.7 percent from the 949,000 flights operated in March 2005 (Table 1).

System Comparisons (Table 1-6)

In other total system comparisons from the first quarter of 2005 to the first quarter of 2006 and from March 2005 to March 2006 (Table 1):

Revenue passenger miles (RPMs), a measure of the number of passengers and the distance flown, were up 1.5 percent in the first quarter. In March, RPMs were up 0.5 percent.

Available seat-miles (ASMs), a measure of airline capacity using the number of seats and the distance flown, were down 1.3 percent in the first quarter. In March, ASMs were down 0.9 percent.

Passenger load factor, passengers carried as a proportion of available seats, was up 2.1 load factor points to 76.7 percent in the first quarter. In March, load factor was up 1.2 load factor points to 81.2 percent.

Flight stage length, the average non-stop distance flown per departure, was up 2.7 percent in the first quarter. In March, flight stage length was up 3.4 percent.

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Passenger trip length, the average distance flown per passenger, was up 1.1 percent in the first quarter. In March, passenger trip length was up 1.3 percent.

Among U.S. airlines, American Airlines carried 23.7 million passengers on its system during the first quarter, the most of any airline (Table 3). In March, American Airlines carried 8.7 million passengers on its system, the most of any airline (Table 4).

Among airports, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport was the busiest U.S. airport during the first quarter, with 9.6 million domestic and international passenger boardings (Table 5). In March, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport was the busiest U.S. airport with 3.6 million domestic and international passenger boardings on U. S. carriers (Table 6).

Domestic Air Travel (Tables 7-12)

U.S. airlines carried 155.1 million domestic passengers during the first quarter of 2006, up from the 154.8 million carried during the same period in 2005 (Table 8). The passengers were carried on 2.34 million flights, down 4.5 percent from the 2.45 million flights operated in the first quarter of 2005 (Table 7).

The airlines carried 58.5 million domestic passengers during March 2006, down from the 59.2 million carried during March 2005. The passengers were carried on 828,000 flights, down 5.1 percent from the 873,000 flights operated in March 2005 (Table 7).

Following are other domestic comparisons from the first quarter of 2005 to the first quarter of 2006 and from March 2005 to March 2006 (Table 7). Comparisons for March and the first quarter may be affected by the Easter holiday, which was in March in 2005 but in April in 2006.

Domestic revenue passenger miles (RPMs), a measure of the number of passengers and the distance flown, were up 1.2 percent in the first quarter. In March, domestic RPMs were down 0.5 percent.

Domestic available seat-miles (ASMs), a measure of airline capacity using the number of seats and the distance flown, were down 2.6 percent in the first quarter. In March, domestic ASMs were down 2.7 percent.

Domestic passenger load factor, passengers carried as a proportion of available seats, was up 2.9 load factor points to 76.8 percent in the first quarter. In March, domestic load factor was up 1.8 load factor points to 81.4 percent.

Domestic flight stage length, the average non-stop distance flown per departure, was up 2.2 percent in the first quarter. In March, domestic flight stage length was up 2.5 percent.

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Domestic passenger trip length, the average distance flown per passenger, was up 1.0 percent in the first quarter. In March, domestic passenger trip length was up 0.7 percent.

Southwest Airlines carried 22.0 million domestic passengers during the first quarter, the most of any airline (Table 9). In March, Southwest carried 8.3 million domestic passengers, the most of any airline (Table 10).

Hartsfield-Jackson was the busiest domestic airport during the first quarter, with 8.9 million domestic passenger boardings (Table 11). In March, Hartsfield-Jackson was the busiest domestic airport with 3.4 million domestic passenger boardings (Table 12).

International Air Travel (Tables 13-18)

U.S. airlines carried 21.0 million international passengers during the first quarter of 2006, up from the 20.8 million carried during the same period in 2005 (Table 14). The passengers were carried on 213,000 flights, up 0.6 percent from the 212,000 flights operated in the first quarter of 2005 (Table 13).

The airlines carried 7.86 million international passengers during March 2006, up from the 7.75 million carried during March 2005. The passengers were carried on 76,079 flights, up 0.4 percent from the 75,741 flights operated in March 2005 (Table 13).

In other international comparisons from the first quarter of 2005 to the first quarter of 2006 and from March 2005 to March 2006 (Table 13):

International revenue passenger miles (RPMs), a measure of the number of passengers and the distance flown, were up 2.1 percent in the first quarter. In March, international RPMs were up 3.1 percent.

International available seat-miles (ASMs), a measure of airline capacity using the number of seats and the distance flown, were up 2.3 percent in the first quarter. In March, international ASMs were up 3.9 percent.

International passenger load factor, passengers carried as a proportion of available seats, was down 0.2 load factor points in the first quarter. In March, international load factor was down 0.7 load factor points.

International flight stage length, the average non-stop distance flown per departure, was up 1.8 percent in the first quarter. In March, international flight stage length was up 3.2 percent.

International passenger trip length, the average distance flown per passenger, was up 0.8 percent in the first quarter. In March, international passenger trip length was up 1.7 percent.

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American Airlines carried 5.04 million international passengers during the first quarter, the most of any U.S. airline (Table 15). In March, American carried 1.83 million international passengers, the most of any airline (Table 16).

Miami International was the busiest U.S. airport for international travel on U.S. carriers during the first quarter, with 1.14 million international passenger boardings (Table 17). In March, Miami International was the busiest international airport with 399,000 international passenger boardings (Table 18).

Reporting Notes

Additional airline traffic data can be found on the BTS website at TranStats, the Intermodal Transportation Database at <http://transtats.bts.gov>. Click on “Aviation,” then on “Air Carrier Statistics (Form 41 Traffic),” then click on “T-100 Market” for system numbers, “T-100 Domestic Market” for domestic numbers or “T-100 International Market” for international numbers.

Data are compiled from monthly reports filed with BTS by commercial air carriers detailing operations, passenger traffic and freight traffic. This release includes data received by BTS from 116 airlines as of June 13 for U.S. carrier scheduled and non-scheduled civilian operations. Foreign point-to-point flights operated by U.S. carriers are included in system and international totals.

Data are subject to revision. BTS has scheduled July 13 for the release of April traffic data.

Domestic traffic numbers through March 2006 and international traffic numbers through December 2005 are available on the BTS website at <http://transtats.bts.gov>.

Table 1: Total System (Domestic and Foreign) Airline Travel on U.S. Carriers

	Monthly			Year-to-Date		
	Mar. 2005	Mar. 2006	Change	2005	2006	Change
Passengers (in millions)	66.9	66.4	-0.9%	175.5	176.1	0.3%
Flights (in thousands)	949	905	-4.7%	2,664	2,555	-4.1%
Revenue Passenger Miles(in billions)	69.9	70.2	0.5%	184.0	186.7	1.5%
Available Seat-Miles(in billions)	87.3	86.5	-0.9%	246.6	243.4	-1.3%
Load Factor*	80.0	81.2	1.2	74.6	76.7	2.1
Flight Stage Length**	678	701	3.4%	679	697	2.7%
Passenger Trip Length***	1,044	1,058	1.3%	1,048	1,060	1.1%

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Market and Segment

*Change in load factor points

**The average non-stop distance flown per departure in miles

*** The average distance flown per passenger in miles

Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

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Table 2. Total Industry (Domestic and Foreign) Enplanements on U.S. Carriers
Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

Month	2004	2005	2004-2005 Pct. Change	2006	2005-2006 Pct. Change
January	50.2	55.1	9.7	56.0	1.7
February	51.4	53.5	4.1	53.8	0.5
March	61.3	66.9	9.3	66.4	-0.9
April	60.1	62.2	3.6		
May	59.8	64.7	8.3		
June	64.4	67.8	5.2		
July	68.0	71.3	4.9		
August	65.4	67.4	3.0		
September	53.8	57.2	6.3		
October	60.7	60.3	-0.5		
November	57.9	59.1	2.0		
December	59.5	59.9	0.6		
Yr. Total	712.5	745.5			
3 Mo. Total	162.9	175.5	7.8	176.1	0.3

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Market

Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

Table 3. Top 10 U.S. Airlines, ranked by Jan.-March 2006 System* Enplanements
Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

Jan.- Mar. 2006 Rank	Carrier	Jan.-Mar. 2006 Enplaned Passengers	Jan.- Mar. 2005 Rank	Jan.-Mar. 2005 Enplaned Passengers
1	American Airlines	23.7	1	23.1
2	Southwest Airlines	22.0	3	19.8
3	Delta Air Lines	18.1	2	21.6
4	United Airlines	16.3	4	15.6
5	Northwest Airlines	12.6	5	13.5
6	Continental Airlines	11.0	7	10.0
7	U.S. Airways	8.8	6	10.6
8	America West Airlines	5.1	8	5.2
9	AirTran Airways	4.5	12	3.6
10	SkyWest Airlines	4.5	11	3.7

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Market

* System equals domestic plus international

Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding

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Table 4. Top 10 U.S. Airlines, ranked by March 2006 System* Enplanements
 Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

Mar. 2006 Rank	Carrier	Mar. 2006 Enplaned Passengers	Mar. 2005 Rank	Mar. 2005 Enplaned Passengers
1	American Airlines	8.7	1	8.7
2	Southwest Airlines	8.3	3	7.7
3	Delta Air Lines	6.8	2	8.2
4	United Airlines	6.1	4	5.7
5	Northwest Airlines	4.8	5	5.2
6	Continental Airlines	4.2	7	3.9
7	U.S. Airways	3.4	6	4.2
8	America West Airlines	1.9	8	1.9
9	AirTran Airways	1.8	11	1.4
10	SkyWest Airlines	1.7	12	1.4

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Market

* System equals domestic plus international

Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

Table 5. Top 10 U.S. Airports, ranked by Jan.-March 2006 System* Enplanements
 Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

Jan.- Mar. 2006 Rank	Airport	Jan.-Mar. 2006 Enplaned Passengers	Jan.- Mar. 2005 Rank	Jan.-Mar. 2005 Enplaned Passengers
1	Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta	9.6	1	10.0
2	Chicago O'Hare	8.1	2	7.8
3	Dallas-Ft. Worth	6.7	3	6.4
4	Los Angeles Int'l	5.3	4	5.3
5	Denver	5.3	7	4.7
6	Las Vegas McCarran	5.1	5	4.8
7	Phoenix Sky Harbor	5.0	6	4.8
8	Houston Bush Intercontinental	4.7	8	4.3
9	Minneapolis-St.Paul	4.1	9	4.3
10	Orlando	4.1	11	4.1

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Market

* System equals domestic plus international

Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding

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Table 6. Top 10 U.S. Airports ranked by March 2006 System* Enplanements
 Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

Mar. 2006 Rank	Airport	Mar. 2006 Enplaned Passengers	Mar. 2005 Rank	Mar. 2005 Enplaned Passengers
1	Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta	3.6	1	3.8
2	Chicago O'Hare	3.1	2	3.0
3	Dallas-Ft. Worth	2.5	3	2.4
4	Denver	2.0	7	1.7
5	Los Angeles Int'l	2.0	4	2.0
6	Las Vegas McCarran	1.9	6	1.8
7	Phoenix Sky Harbor	1.9	5	1.8
8	Houston Bush Intercontinental	1.7	9	1.6
9	Minneapolis-St.Paul	1.6	8	1.7
10	Detroit Metro Wayne County	1.5	10	1.6

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Market

* System equals domestic plus international

Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

Table 7: Domestic Airline Travel on U.S. Carriers

	Monthly			Year-to-Date		
	Mar. 2005	Mar. 2006	Change	2005	2006	Change
Passengers (in millions)	59.2	58.5	-1.2%	154.8	155.1	0.2%
Flights (in thousands)	873	828	-5.1%	2,452	2,342	-4.5%
Revenue Passenger Miles(in billions)	51.2	50.9	-0.5%	133.5	135.2	1.2%
Available Seat-Miles(in billions)	64.3	62.6	-2.7%	180.8	176.0	-2.6%
Load Factor*	79.6	81.4	1.8	73.9	76.8	2.9
Flight Stage Length**	604	620	2.5%	603	617	2.2%
Passenger Trip Length***	865	871	0.7%	863	872	1.0%

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Domestic Market and Segment

*Change in load factor points

**The average non-stop distance flown per departure in miles

*** The average distance flown per passenger in miles

Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

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Table 8. Total Industry Domestic Enplanements on U.S. Carriers
 Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

Month	2004	2005	2004- 2005 Pct. Change	2006	2005- 2006 Pct. Change
January	44.2	48.2	9.0	49.0	1.7
February	45.7	47.3	3.6	47.5	0.4
March	54.6	59.2	8.3	58.5	-1.2
April	53.7	55.3	2.8		
May	53.4	57.6	7.8		
June	57.4	60.0	4.6		
July	60.1	62.7	4.5		
August	57.8	59.4	2.8		
September	48.0	50.8	5.9		
October	54.6	54.0	-1.0		
November	52.1	53.0	1.8		
December	52.9	53.0	0.2		
Yr. Total	634.5	660.6	4.1		
3 Mo. Tot	144.5	154.8		155.1	0.2

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Domestic Market

Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

Table 9. Top 10 U.S. Airlines, ranked by Jan.-March 2006 Domestic Enplanements
 Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

Jan.- Mar. 2006 Rank	Carrier	Jan.-Mar. 2006 Enplanements	Jan.- Mar. 2005 Rank	Jan.-Mar. 2005 Enplanements
1	Southwest Airlines	22.0	1	19.8
2	American Airlines	18.6	3	18.1
3	Delta Air Lines	16.0	2	19.7
4	United Airlines	13.4	4	12.9
5	Northwest Airlines	10.2	5	11.1
6	Continental Airlines	8.5	7	7.7
7	U.S. Airways	7.7	6	9.5
8	America West Airlines	4.7	8	4.8
9	AirTran Airways	4.5	11	3.5
10	SkyWest Airlines	4.3	10	3.6

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Domestic Market

Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding

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Table 10. Top 10 U.S. Airlines, ranked by March 2006 Domestic Enplanements
Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

Mar. 2006 Rank	Carrier	Mar. 2006 Enplanements	Mar. 2005 Rank	Mar. 2005 Enplanements
1	Southwest Airlines	8.3	1	7.7
2	American Airlines	6.9	3	6.8
3	Delta Air Lines	6.0	2	7.5
4	United Airlines	5.0	4	4.7
5	Northwest Airlines	4.0	5	4.3
6	Continental Airlines	3.2	7	3.0
7	U.S. Airways	3.0	6	3.8
8	AirTran Airways	1.8	10	1.4
9	America West Airlines	1.7	8	1.8
10	SkyWest Airlines	1.6	11	1.4

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Domestic Market
Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding

Table 11. Top 10 U.S. Airports, ranked by Jan.-March 2006 Domestic Enplanements

Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

Jan.- Mar. 2006 Rank	Airport	Jan.-Mar. 2006 Enplanements	Jan.- Mar. 2005 Rank	Jan.-Mar. 2005 Enplanements
1	Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta	8.9	1	9.3
2	Chicago O'Hare	7.4	2	7.1
3	Dallas-Ft. Worth	6.1	3	5.9
4	Denver	5.1	7	4.6
5	Las Vegas McCarran	5.0	5	4.8
6	Los Angeles Int'l	4.9	4	4.9
7	Phoenix Sky Harbor	4.8	6	4.6
8	Orlando	4.0	8	4.0
9	Houston Bush Intercontinental	4.0	11	3.7
10	Minneapolis-St.Paul	3.8	9	3.9

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Domestic Market
Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding

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Table 12. Top 10 U.S. Airports, ranked by March 2006 Domestic Enplanements
 Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

Mar. 2006 Rank	Airport	Mar. 2006 Enplanements	Mar. 2005 Rank	Mar. 2005 Enplanements
1	Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta	3.35	1	3.56
2	Chicago O'Hare	2.78	2	2.76
3	Dallas-Ft. Worth	2.25	3	2.17
4	Denver	1.95	7	1.69
5	Las Vegas McCarran	1.86	5	1.79
6	Phoenix Sky Harbor	1.81	6	1.77
7	Los Angeles Int'l	1.80	4	1.82
8	Orlando	1.52	9	1.50
9	Houston Bush Intercontinental	1.47	11	1.39
10	Minneapolis-St.Paul	1.45	8	1.53

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Domestic Market
 Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding

Table 13: International Airline Travel on U.S. Carriers

	Monthly			Year-to-Date		
	Mar. 2005	Mar. 2006	Change	2005	2006	Change
Passengers (in millions)	7.75	7.86	1.4%	20.76	21.03	1.3%
Flights	75,741	76,079	0.4%	211,913	213,088	0.6%
Revenue Passenger-Miles(in billions)	18.7	19.3	3.1%	50.4	51.5	2.1%
Available Seat-Miles(in billions)	23.0	23.9	3.9%	65.8	67.4	2.3%
Load Factor*	81.3	80.6	-0.7	76.6	76.4	-0.2
Flight Stage Length**	1,533	1,583	3.2%	1,557	1,586	1.8%
Passenger Trip Length***	2,413	2,454	1.7%	2,429	2,448	0.8%

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 International Market and Segment

*Change in load factor points

**The average non-stop distance flown per departure in miles

*** The average distance flown per passenger in miles

Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

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Table 14. Total Industry International Enplanements on U.S. Carriers
 Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

Month	2004	2005	2004- 2005 Pct. Change	2006	2005- 2006 Pct. Change
January	6.0	6.8	14.0	6.9	1.4
February	5.7	6.2	8.4	6.2	1.1
March	6.6	7.8	16.7	7.9	1.4
April	6.4	7.0	10.1		
May	6.4	7.1	11.9		
June	7.1	7.8	9.9		
July	8.0	8.6	8.3		
August	7.6	8.0	5.0		
September	5.8	6.4	9.0		
October	6.1	6.3	3.8		
November	5.9	6.1	3.3		
December	6.6	6.9	3.9		
Yr. Total	78.1	84.9	8.7		
3 Mo. Tot	18.3	20.8	13.3	21.0	1.3

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 International Market

Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

Table 15. Top 10 U.S. Airlines, ranked by Jan.-March 2006 International Enplanements

Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

Jan.- Mar. 2006 Rank	Carrier	Jan.-Mar. 2006 Enplanements	Jan.- Mar. 2005 Rank	Jan.-Mar. 2005 Enplanements
1	American Airlines	5.043	1	4.984
2	United Airlines	2.853	2	2.782
3	Continental Airlines	2.486	4	2.314
4	Northwest Airlines	2.367	3	2.404
5	Delta Air Lines	2.078	5	1.895
6	U.S. Airways	1.080	6	1.138
7	Alaska Airlines	.638	7	.569
8	ExpressJet Airlines	.464	9	.427
9	Executive Airlines	.447	8	.467
10	America West Airlines	.350	12	.326

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 International Market

Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding

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Table 16. Top 10 U.S. Airlines, ranked by March 2006 International Enplanements
Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

Mar. 2006 Rank	Carrier	Mar. 2006 Enplanements	Mar. 2005 Rank	Mar. 2005 Enplanements
1	American Airlines	1.827	1	1.844
2	United Airlines	1.042	2	1.019
3	Continental Airlines	.947	3	.874
4	Northwest Airlines	.890	4	.870
5	Delta Air Lines	.809	5	.723
6	U.S. Airways	.428	6	.464
7	Alaska Airlines	.225	7	.208
8	ExpressJet Airlines	.172	9	.153
9	Executive Airlines	.158	8	.173
10	America West Airlines	.126	11	.121

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 International Market
Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding

Table 17. Top 10 U.S. Airports, ranked by Jan.-March 2006 International Enplanements
Passenger numbers in thousands (000)

Jan.- Mar. 2006 Rank	Airport	Jan.-Mar. 2006 Enplanements	Jan.- Mar. 2005 Rank	Jan.-Mar. 2005 Enplanements
1	Miami	1,141	1	1,131
2	Chicago O'Hare	767	3	738
3	Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta	765	5	673
4	Newark Liberty	735	6	649
5	New York John F. Kennedy	730	2	821
6	Houston Bush Intercontinental	720	4	685
7	Dallas-Ft. Worth	551	7	514
8	Los Angeles Int'l	431	9	417
9	Detroit Metro Wayne County	416	8	419
10	San Francisco	391	11	384

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 International Market
Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding

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Table 18. Top 10 U.S. Airports, ranked by March 2006 International Enplanements
Passenger numbers in thousands (000)

Mar. 2006 Rank	Airport	Mar. 2006 Enplanements	Mar. 2005 Rank	Mar. 2005 Enplanements
1	Miami	399	1	405
2	Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta	300	5	252
3	Chicago O'Hare	297	3	289
4	Newark Liberty	292	6	247
5	New York John F. Kennedy	284	2	320
6	Houston Bush Intercontinental	267	4	255
7	Dallas-Ft. Worth	208	7	196
8	Detroit Metro Wayne County	163	8	164
9	Los Angeles Int'l	154	10	149
10	Minneapolis-St.Paul	149	9	152

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 International Market
 Note: Percentage changes based on numbers prior to rounding

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