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2005 Total Airline System Passenger Traffic Up 4.6 Percent From 2004

U.S. airlines carried 4.6 percent more passengers and flew more flights during 2005 than they did during 2004 on both domestic and international flights from the United States, 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 (RITA), reported that the airlines carried 745.7 million passengers on their total systems during 2005, up from the 712.6 million carried in 2004. During the first nine months of 2005, U.S. airlines carried 5.9 percent more passengers than in the same period in 2004 while in the last three months they carried 0.7 percent more passengers than in 2004 (Table 2).

The passengers were carried on 11.0 million flights, up 1.0 percent from the 10.9 million flights operated in 2004 (Table 1).

In other total system comparisons from 2004 to 2005 (Table 1):

Revenue passenger miles, a measure of the number of passengers and the distance flown, were up 5.7 percent.

Available seat-miles, a measure of airline capacity using the number of seats and the distance flown, were up 2.9 percent.

Passenger load factor, passengers carried as a proportion of available seats, was up 2.1 load factor points.

Flight stage length, the average non-stop distance flown per departure, was up 2.1 percent.

Passenger trip length, the average distance flown per passenger, was up 1.0 percent.

Among U.S. airlines, American Airlines carried 98.1 million passengers on its system during 2005, the most of any airline. American Eagle Airlines was the fastest growing of the top 10 airlines, carrying 17.9 percent more passengers in 2005 than 2004, while United Airlines carried 5.7 percent fewer passengers, the biggest decline of any of the top 10 airlines (Table 3).

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Among airports, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport was the busiest U.S. airport during 2005, with 41.6 million domestic and international passenger boardings. Houston Bush Intercontinental was the fastest growing of the top 10 airports, with 9.9 percent more passenger boardings in 2005 than 2004, while Dallas-Fort Worth International, down 0.1 percent, was the only one of the top 10 airports with fewer boardings in 2005 than 2004 (Table 4).

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 Domestic Market."

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 149 airlines as of April 18, 2006. Data are subject to revision.

Domestic traffic numbers through January 2006 and international traffic numbers through October 2005 are available on the BTS website at <http://transtats.bts.gov>. The BTS press release on 2005 domestic airline traffic can be found at http://www.bts.gov/press_releases/2006/bts013_06/html/bts013_06.html.

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

	2004	2005	Change
Passengers (in millions)	712.6	745.7	4.6%
Flights (in millions)	10.9	11.0	1.0%
Revenue Passenger Miles(in billions)	745.3	788.0	5.7%
Available Seat-Miles(in billions)	987.9	1,016.4	2.9%
Load factor	75.4	77.5	2.1 points
Flight stage length*	664	678	2.1%
Passenger trip length**	1,046	1,057	1.0%

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

*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	2003	2004	2005	2004-2005 Pct. Change
January	48.9	50.2	55.1	9.6
February	46.3	51.4	53.5	4.1
March	56.2	61.3	66.9	9.2
April	52.2	60.1	62.2	3.6
May	54.5	59.8	64.7	8.2
June	58.5	64.5	67.8	5.2
July	63.0	68.0	71.3	4.9
August	61.2	65.4	67.4	3.1
September	49.9	53.8	57.3	6.5
October	55.8	60.7	60.4	-0.5
November	52.9	57.9	59.1	2.1
December	56.1	59.5	59.9	0.6
Annual Total	655.4	712.6	745.7	4.6

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 2005 System* Enplanements
 Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

2005 Rank	Carrier	2005 Passengers	2004 Rank	2004 Passengers	Pct Change 2004- 2005
1	American	98.096	1	91.610	7.1
2	Southwest	88.436	3	81.121	9.0
3	Delta	86.090	2	86.891	-0.9
4	United	66.765	4	70.822	-5.7
5	Northwest	56.514	5	55.410	2.0
6	Continental	42.806	7	40.732	5.1
7	US Airways	41.869	6	42.408	-1.3
8	America West	22.130	8	21.132	4.7
9	American Eagle	17.534	10	14.869	17.9
10	Alaska	16.758	9	16.294	2.9

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. Airports ranked by 2005 System* Enplanements
 Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

2005 Rank	Airport Name	2005 Passengers	2004 Rank	2004 Passengers	Pct. Change 2004-2005
1	Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta	41.596	1	40.367	3.0
2	Chicago O'Hare	34.529	2	33.862	2.0
3	Dallas-Ft. Worth	27.746	3	27.787	-0.1
4	Los Angeles Int'l	22.939	4	22.859	0.4
5	Las Vegas McCarran	20.711	6	19.416	6.7
6	Denver	20.484	5	20.104	1.9
7	Phoenix Sky Harbor	20.110	7	19.158	5.0
8	Houston Bush Intercontinental	18.409	10	16.749	9.9
9	Minneapolis-St.Paul	17.910	8	17.366	3.1
10	Detroit Metro	17.392	9	16.892	3.0

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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