

CLT's Yearend Operations Show Sustained Growth While Originating and International Travelers Rise

February 7, 2017 - Charlotte Douglas International Airport's operation numbers showed sustained growth in 2016 handling 545,742 aircraft movements, a gain of 0.33 percent from 2015.

Last year, CLT added 12 new flights. American Airlines began nonstop service to San Jose, CA (SJC); Madison, Wisconsin (MSN); Cedar Rapids, Iowa (CID) and Peoria, Illinois (PIA). American also launched its historic nonstop flight to Havana, Cuba (HAV). Frontier Airlines introduced nonstop service to Chicago O'Hare (ORD) and Orlando (MCO). Southwest Airlines debuted nonstop service to Nashville (BNA). Via Air added service to Williamstown, West Virginia (PKB); Lewisburg, West Virginia (LWB); Weyers Cave, Virginia (SHD) and Orlando-Sanford (SFB) in Sanford, Florida.

While operations were up, total passenger numbers saw a 1 percent dip compared to 2015, serving 44,422,022 million passengers in 2016. Airport officials attribute the decrease primarily to lower airline load factors, a trend that is occurring nationwide at several large airports.

2016 CLT passenger numbers, however, reveal a broader story. Travelers originating their flight at CLT (local passengers) are on pace to rise by more than 7 percent in 2016. The most current numbers show 4.7 million fliers from January - September 2016 began or ended their trip at CLT, which is up approximately 8 percent compared to that same time period in 2015. (Complete originating passenger numbers for calendar year 2016 are expected in March.) CLT has been experiencing an increase in originating passenger traffic over the last three years due to the region's growth. Currently, local traffic is 27 percent of CLT's overall passenger traffic versus 73 percent of connecting traffic.

"This is positive news for the Airport," said Aviation Director Brent Cagle. "It shows more people are choosing the Charlotte region to call home, which in turn creates additional local demand for service. The Airport has always believed that a key to our success lies in our ability to retain connecting service while growing local traffic. Our growth in local traffic will ultimately work to promote competition in the market and help attract additional international destinations."

The Airport also saw a 10 percent surge of 3,111,398 travelers flying abroad in 2016 compared to 2015. In addition to launching nonstop service to Havana Cuba, American Airlines added a second flight to Heathrow Airport. Air Canada Express had a 17 percent upswing in passenger traffic as well.

Another significant jump of 14 percent was in cargo, climbing to 154,477 tons in 2016. Last year, FedEx numbers were up by 13 percent, and CLT welcomed ABX Air.

CLT remains the second largest hub for American Airlines, the world's largest airline. The Airport is in the midst of Destination CLT, a \$2.5 billion capital investment program, aimed at enhancing capacity based on the Airport's growth forecast through 2035. It includes expansion of the roadways, curbside, airfield and terminal.

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