

# STL Wraps 2017 with Surge in Passengers, New Business Engagements

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## Business Diversity Expands as Airport also surpasses 14.7 million passengers

St. Louis Lambert International Airport (STL) wrapped up 2017 with another surge in passenger growth and airline activity, as well as a significant increase in new business engagements with minority and women-owned businesses. Airport Director Rhonda Hamm-Niebruegge briefed the St. Louis Airport Commission this week on the [CY17 Passenger & Operations Report](#) and the annual [Business Diversity Development Report for FY17](#) showing STL is successfully tracking to its strategic goals for air service growth while expanding its base of regional business partners.

Passenger traffic at STL grew 5.5 percent in 2017, coming off the previous year of 10 percent growth. Total passengers topped out at 14,730,656 this past year, serving 771,000 more passengers than in 2016. December 2017 marked the 28<sup>th</sup> straight month of passenger growth and it also capped STL's busiest year in a decade, since STL logged 15.3 million passengers in 2007. Southwest Airlines added the two newest markets to the Airport in the past year with new service to Charleston, SC (CHS) and Pensacola, FL (PNS). Previous new markets by Southwest in 2016 (Cleveland, Des Moines, Wichita, Little Rock, Oakland and Pittsburgh) continued to drive the surge in

connecting passenger growth in 2017. Connecting passenger numbers grew nearly 30 percent for the Airport as a whole with 1.5 million passengers traveling through STL to reach their final destination.

One of the strongest growth indicators for 2017 has been seat capacity, the number of total seats on departing flights. With new destinations and larger aircraft added to the market over the last year, seat capacity grew to 18.7 million from 17.7 million for CY2016, or a 5.9 percent increase. The Airport saw daily departures peak at 264 in the past year from a peak of 256 in 2016. STL served 71 non-stop destinations in 2017 versus 70 in the prior year.

STL's total aircraft operations for 2017, which accounts for takeoffs and landings for commercial passenger, cargo, general aviation or military flights, increased 3.1 percent with 196,405 operations. The Airport handled 144.2 million lbs. of cargo in 2017, an increase of 2.4 percent over 2016.

St. Louis Lambert International Airport also reported strong growth in engaging with Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs) and Women Business Enterprises (WBEs) based on its just released [FY17 annual report](#) for the period that ended June 2017. MBE and WBE firms received 49 percent in local spending on construction and other professional services which is a 10 percent improvement over the previous year. On federally-funded contracts, Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) saw their participation grow to 34 percent from 28 percent. The Airport spent \$45 million on general service contracts with 34 percent going to MBEs and WBEs.

STL is now three years into its 2015-2020 Strategic Plan with performance goals for air service, financial sustainability, economic development and community engagement, along with overall operational excellence.

The Airport has already announced additional destinations over the next three months of 2018 with Southwest Airlines adding seasonal service to Palm Beach International Airport in Florida (PBI) in March plus new non-stop service to [San Jose, CA \(SJC\) and Sacramento, CA \(SMF\)](#) beginning April 8. [WOW air will begin its new non-stop international service to Reykjavík, Iceland on May 17.](#)