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In 2018, PHL Saw More Passengers, Operations; Moved More Cargo

PHILADELPHIA – In 2018, 31,691,956 passengers passed through Philadelphia International Airport (PHL), a 7.1% increase from the previous year and the highest since 2008 when PHL recorded 31.8 million passengers. It was also the first uptick in passenger numbers since 2015 and the highest percentage increase since the 10.5% posted in 2005. The all-time high for passenger traffic is 32.2 million set in 2007.

At the same time, PHL had 379,665 takeoffs and landings, 2.6% more than 2017 and the first percentage increase in aircraft operations since 2005.

The upswing in passengers and aircraft operations is largely due to the new air service added by PHL carriers. American Airlines, PHL's largest airline with more than 70% of the passenger traffic, Frontier Airlines, Spirit Airlines, Southwest Airlines and Delta Air Lines launched non-stop flights to 27 destinations in 2018. In addition, PHL welcomed Aer Lingus, its second new foreign flag carrier in as many years, with year-round service to Dublin.

In addition, 555,327 tons of cargo was handled at PHL, 20% more than the previous year, the largest percentage increase dating to 2001 and the first time since 2008 the cargo tonnage eclipsed 500,000. The all-time high for cargo tonnage is 629,995 set in 2004. UPS, which accounted for 60.5% of cargo tonnage, was the main driver in this increase by moving 26.6% more tons of cargo in 2018.

PHL also saw 4,246,171 international passengers – a 6% surge from 2017 and the largest percentage increase since 17.1% in 2004. The upswing was spurred by American's new seasonal service to Budapest, Prague and year-round service to Zurich; the Prague flight proved so popular that in 2019 American is upgrading the aircraft from a Boeing 767 to an Airbus 330-200 featuring Premium Economy and 500 more seats per week.

“Our airport team continues to work tirelessly with our airline, tourism and business partners to attract new air service whether it's more flights to more cities by our established carriers or bringing in a new airline,” said Airport CEO Chellie Cameron. “Our 2018 numbers show how the team's efforts produced real results. We are encouraged by the upswing in passengers, operations and cargo handling and are eager to maintain this positive trend.”