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News Release

For Immediate Release

Airport Numbers Ascend, Buck Trend

Passenger numbers were up at the Springfield airport in 2012 — the upward movement bucks national and regional trends.

"Our total passenger numbers were up 2.8% in 2012," says Brian Weiler, airport director of aviation. "In this tight airline economy that's impressive. It shows there's strong passenger demand in Springfield."

Total passenger numbers at competing airports prove the point. Tulsa was down 2%. Kansas City was down 4%. St. Louis was up 1.1%. Northwest Arkansas was up .60%.

"The airlines are in cost cutting mode. They're dealing with the lingering effects of the recession by cutting back on seat capacity and number of flights," says Weiler. "The result is that many airports across the country have seen flat or negative passenger growth. The fact that our numbers were up almost three percent is a reflection of Southwest Missouri's strong economy."

The current unemployment rate in the Springfield metropolitan area is 5.4%. Compare that to the national rate of 7.8%. "There's an old rule of thumb in the airline industry," says Kent Boyd, airport marketing director, "More employment means more people flying."

Whether the upward trend continues is an open question. "Few expect airlines to add capacity in 2013," says Boyd. "Nationally, flight schedules show a 1.5% drop in seat capacity in the first quarter." That's compared to the same quarter last year. "In spite of the capacity cuts I think there's a good chance our upward trend will continue — especially since our regional economy is doing so well."

Passenger numbers weren't the only thing going up at the Springfield Airport — air freight shipments went up 6.6%. "On average North American airports saw flat cargo numbers," says Boyd. "Up just half a percent — so we're bucking national and regional trends on this metric as well."

The airport in Kansas City was the only other competing airport to see freight growth: 2.9%.

By The Numbers

Total Airport Passengers

Airport

Total Passengers 2012

Percent Change from 2011

Kansas City (MCI)	9,896,821	- 4.00%
Northwest Arkansas (XNA)	1,109,917	0.60%
St. Louis (STL)	12,668,726	1.10%
Springfield (SGF)	752,214	2.80%
Tulsa (TUL)	2,653,765	- 2.00%

Total Air Freight

Airport	Air Freight 2012 (lbs)	Percent Change from 2011
Kansas City (MCI)	189,872,059	2.91%
Northwest Arkansas (XNA)	55,333,000	- 6.70%
St. Louis (STL)	152,580,019	- 0.50%
Springfield (SGF)	28,830,104	6.60%
Tulsa (TUL)	56,372,000	1.10%

SOURCE: data obtained directly from each airport

For more information, contact: Kent Boyd, Public Information and Marketing, 417.868.0500 | x. 2008 or 417.844.2255 (cell), kboyd@flyspringfield.com