

Killeen-Fort Hood Regional Airport sees 18 percent increase - 8/2/2006

(Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood: Infrastructure & Transportation)

(Killeen) - Killeen-Fort Hood Regional Airport turns two years old today. Officials said enplanements in the second year of operation had grown by 29,904, an 18 percent increase. "We expect to see these numbers continue to increase as a result of area growth, increased services and the strong demand for the convenience..." John Sutton, Killeen's aviation director, said. The local trend exceeds national figures. Domestic enplanements on U.S. airlines increased only about 1 percent during the first quarter of this year, rising from 214,027,857 in the first quarter of 2005 to 215,497,188 this quarter, according to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics. At the outset, the Killeen airport had two regional carriers, American Eagle and Colgan Air, a connector for Continental Airlines. In April of this year, the Las Vegas-based Allegiant Air started nonstop jet service to Las Vegas. Allegiant's flights have been at 95 percent capacity lately on every flight. Delta Airlines plans to resume service to Killeen with twice-daily flights to Atlanta starting Sept. 7. Delta had been flying to Dallas from Killeen Municipal Airport, now called Skylark Field, but stopped in 2003 due to fleet conversion from turboprop to regional jets. Killeen-Fort Hood Regional Airport, with its 10,000-foot runway, can handle jets. A \$3.3 million project to expand the parking lot by 700 spaces is expected to be complete by September, funded 90 percent by a grant from the Federal Aviation Administration. The project also includes repair on the existing 822-space lot. The airport, which shares runway facilities with Gray Army Airfield, the official-business airport for Fort Hood, has been attracting about 50 percent of the airline travel business for its area.

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