



Indianapolis International Airport is prepared for busy Spring Break weekend

INDIANAPOLIS—Friday will be the start of the Spring Break vacation period for many central Indiana families. For those who will travel by air to enjoy some welcome relief from the gray skies and wintry weather, Indianapolis International Airport (IND) is prepared to manage large numbers of passengers.

Based on the numbers of out-bound or departing passengers provided by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), airport officials anticipate lower passenger volumes over the next seven days than the same period last year.

2008 PASSENGER PROJECTIONS

Friday, Saturday, and Sundays are usually the heaviest days for Spring Break travelers. Projections through Monday, March 31 include:

▪ Friday, March 28	17,125	<i>(down 3 percent)</i>
▪ Saturday, March 29	14,759	<i>(down 4 percent)</i>
▪ Sunday, March 30	14,806	<i>(up 12 percent)</i>
▪ Monday, March 31	12,530	<i>(down 18 percent)</i>

The number of travelers departing IND during the same period in 2007 were:

▪ Friday, March 30	17,672
▪ Saturday, March 31	15,346
▪ Sunday, April 1	13,090
▪ Monday, April 2	15,304

A comparison of March 2007 volumes with those for March 2008 reveals IND's passenger traffic is down about 10 percent overall.

One reason for the decrease is an increase in air fares. Industry analysts say record prices for both crude oil and refined jet fuel are causing airlines to raise fares and add more service charges to ticket prices. Others are grounding or selling aircraft, trimming services on marginal routes, and eliminating routes that aren't making a profit.

Farecast.com reports Spring Break air fares are up 10-12 percent over 2007. The average fare will top \$300 and was expected to peak last Friday. On Monday, **USA Today** reported that U.S. airlines could see losses ranging from \$1 to \$9 billion this year, the highest since 9/11.

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HotelNewsResource.com commissioned a study in February that indicated nearly half of American families with children said uncertainty about the U.S. economy caused them to make more modest spring break plans, with most deciding to simply stay at home.

One in two families (47 percent) with children under 18 reported they would scale back their spring excursions. Of those families that intended to scale back their spring break plans, 63 percent said they would cancel their travel plans altogether. Another 19 percent indicated they were undecided.

Another reason for the decrease in the numbers of passengers is unrelated to Spring Break. According to a March 4 **USA Today** report, many businesses are reducing their travel budgets as the economy slows. Instead, these companies are turning toward technologies like audio and Web conferencing to conduct virtual meetings and reduce costs. Others are renting fuel-efficient economy rental cars for short trips.

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