

Des Moines airport has record-breaking 2017

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(Photo: Brian Powers/The Register)

A record-breaking number of passengers flew in and out of the Des Moines International Airport in 2017.

In all, 2,578,308 passengers went through the airport last year — a 3.8 percent increase over 2016, passenger statistics released this week show. It's the sixth straight year that ridership has increased at the state's largest airport.

Executive Director Kevin Foley said the continued year-over-year increase shows the need for a new terminal, planned on the east side of the airport grounds near Fleur Drive.

"Though our current facilities are not equipped to handle this sustained growth, the Des Moines Airport Authority is committed to improving the passenger experience (and) preparing for new airport facilities," he said in a news release.

The airport's existing facilities can function at its maximum 2.5 million passengers — the mark hit for the first time last year — but it puts strains on services, added Shannon Braun, the airport's spokesperson.

Construction on the new terminal has been delayed as the airport authority board looks for ways [to trim costs](/story/money/business/2017/09/15/des-moines-airports-500-million-overhaul-may-delayed-years/665920001/) (/story/money/business/2017/09/15/des-moines-airports-500-million-overhaul-may-delayed-years/665920001/) to the \$500 million project. Original plans called for construction of the 14-gate terminal to begin in 2022, but that may be delayed until 2026 due to federal delays on funding runway upgrades.

Each month of 2017 saw an increase in the total number of passengers flying in and out of the airport compared to the year before, with the exception of September, which saw a decrease of .9 percent. March saw the largest jump, with a 7.7 percent increase, or 16,236 passengers, over 2016.

Six commercial airlines and a charter service serve the Des Moines International Airport. American Airlines had 29 percent of passengers, Delta had 24 percent and United had 23 percent.

The Des Moines International Airport also unveiled [new restaurants and concessions](/story/money/business/2017/09/28/des-moines-international-airport-new-airport-bar/692574001/) (/story/money/business/2017/09/28/des-moines-international-airport-new-airport-bar/692574001/) last year, including Berk & Chester's, Hudson, Arugula & Rye, Milly Supply Co. and Portermill.

35 photos: Traveling through the Des Moines International Airport

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