

St. Louis Regional Freightway



MidAmerica Airport continues to rebound from pandemic year

By DENNIS GRUBAUGH

MidAmerica St. Louis Airport continues to rebound from the pandemic year with record numbers that show the benefit of being a mostly low-cost carrier airport

“We have not seen the same decline as the major airports,” Airport Director Bryan E. Johnson said. “Most of them are the business traveler airports, and we are the leisure traveler or vacation travel service provider.”

MidAmerica’s schedule this year is about 15 percent over 2019, its last record year. This year looks to be a record with both the scheduled flights and the traveling passengers, he said. Departures totaled 1,010 in 2019; they are anticipated to be 1,280 this year.

The airport is in Phase 2 of a four-phase project that will see a terminal expansion project.

The existing terminal will be doubled in size, including two additional gates for the air carriers. Additional funding from the FAA later this year will likely accelerate the project and get it done a year ahead of schedule, by January 2023.

The overall cost is \$32 million. About \$24 million is coming from the federal government and the balance will be mainly paid by the state. There will be around a million dollars in local funding, he said.

“Right now, we have three (aircraft) parking positions, and the expansion

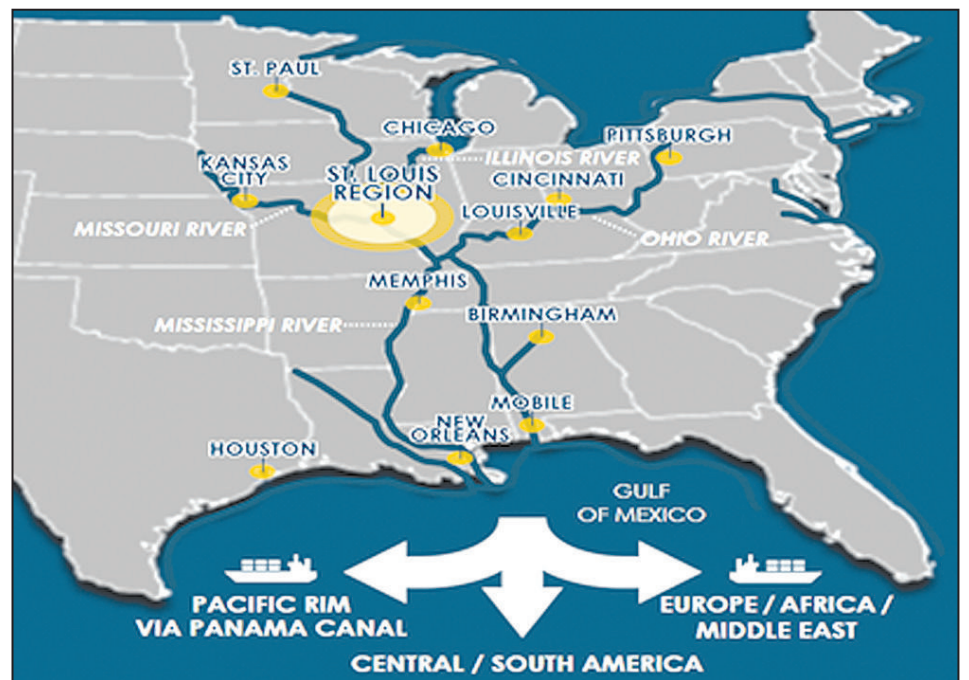
will give us a total of six,” Johnson said. Five will be dedicated to air carriers and the sixth will be more for a position for aircraft maintenance, etc.

The project will also double the size of hold rooms, where passengers wait to board; add 2,000 square feet of concessionaire space; add an additional security line for a total of security lines; and implement a new technology for processing passengers. The latter is a concept like a self-check system, that will increase through-put by about 30 percent.

The moves are all about improving the terminal experience for the travelers, the overall access, and accommodating individuals with needs, among them people with disabilities, nursing mothers, and people with pets.

Phase 1 was the initial infrastructure. Phase 2 is what most people will notice, the steel structure and construction of the terminal facilities (the biggest piece overall); and Phases 3 and 4 will be the combination of the addition of jet bridges, generators and backups, and internal, nonpublic-access work.

On the tenant front, North American Helicopter has just completed construction of a new, 20,000-square-foot hangar. The helicopter operator has contracts to support utilities, the forestry department and other concerns that need helicopter work. Seven units are based at the airport, Johnson said.



The most efficient inland port in the nation connects the Midwest to the lower Mississippi River and on to worldwide destinations.

Ag industry and manufacturers find global connection in St. Louis region

The agriculture and manufacturing industries may not have much in common, but for those operating in either sector in the bi-state St. Louis region, there is an advantage they both enjoy – global connectivity. In addition to its central location in the United States, which makes two-day shipping to most of the country possible, the region offers easy access to multiple rail lines with service to coastal ports of export, along with an enviable position at the heart of America’s marine highway system.

On the manufacturing front, prospects for success improve when a global company operates in a location that effectively accommodates its logistical needs, and the key role location plays has become even more evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. Securing access to talent is important — and the St. Louis region delivers on that front — but access to customers is critical and requires multimodal connectivity and exceptional freight infrastructure connecting to global markets.

Meeting these requirements is especially important for companies with a global supply chain operating from a primary location, such as Cosmos Corporation of O’Fallon, Mo. Having recently expanded its manufacturing, distribution and corporate headquarters with a brand new \$26 million, 200,000-square-foot facility, and with plans for further growth, Cosmos has been serving North

America and more than five dozen countries around the world from the one location during the pandemic.

“One of the many reasons for Cosmos’ success has been the locational attributes of the St. Louis region,” said Cosmos President and CEO Landon Hobson, who adds that connectivity, infrastructure and resultant accessibility to world markets makes it an ideal region in which to run a global company. “One might think that being in a location interior to the country far from the oceans would be a disadvantage for a company like ours that serves 68 countries around the world. In fact, we have found quite the opposite.”

Rail connections provide unrivaled reach: Through the Union Pacific, BNSF, CSX and Norfolk Southern Railroads, scheduled trains leave the St. Louis region to access three west coast ports – Long Beach, Los Angeles and Oakland and two east coast ports – Newark/New York City and Norfolk, Va. From these ports of export, customers around the globe in Europe, Asia, the Far East, Africa, Australia, and the Middle East are well served. Such scheduled service running on certain routes at certain times picking up cars along the way helps to reduce “dwell” time in yards and helps ensure railcars arrive at the expected time. The schedule and the car movement are the priority, not the number of cars pulled.

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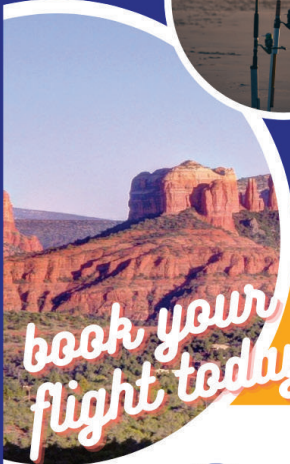
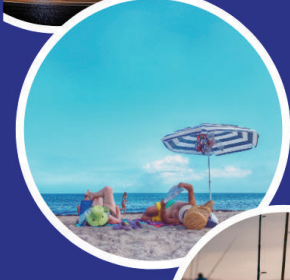


Multiple railroads may be able to provide service to some of these ports and having options like that creates additional opportunities to identify the most cost-effective alternatives and best scheduled service from the St. Louis region.

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