

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**RDU ranked third fastest growing medium-sized airport
in the world**

RDU Airport, NC --- In recently released figures from Airports Council International, Raleigh-Durham International Airport was ranked as the third fastest growing medium-sized airport in the world during 1999. Airports Council International defines medium-sized airports as those with total annual passenger counts greater than five million, but less than 15 million.

The number of passengers using Raleigh-Durham International last year grew to 8.9 million, an increase of 23.7 percent over 1998. The only major United States airport that grew faster than RDU last year was Washington Dulles with a 25.8 percent increase in passenger traffic.

Airport officials attribute this incredible rate of growth to a strong economy, the overall growth of the Triangle region and increased airline competition, which has helped lower fares by nearly 20 percent in the last year.

"We now have 14 major airlines and 11 regional carriers providing service at RDU," said airport spokesman Mike Blanton. "Our airlines are offering more service, nearly 600 scheduled flights a day, and more competitive fares than at anytime in RDU's history."

The trend in flight and passenger growth has continued through the first quarter of this year. Last month passenger growth exceeded 34 percent over March of 1998. Year to date growth stands at 27.4 percent through the end of first quarter.

"These numbers are pretty incredible especially when you consider that we're just now beginning to enter what is traditionally the busier travel periods of the year," said Blanton.

RDU is expecting heavy travel during the upcoming long Easter holiday weekend and encourages travelers to give themselves plenty of time when flying in and out of RDU between now and early next week.

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