As I look back on 2014, it has been a productive year at Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport in so many ways. I would like to highlight a few of our many accomplishments.

First, we started the year with a special press conference to debut the concept renderings of the new North Terminal that will be completed by May 2018, which coincides with the 300th anniversary of the founding of our great City. The illustrations provided a glimpse of the world-class, iconic structure that will be a unique jewel in our region for years to come. The $650 million project is in the final design phase with construction to begin in August 2015.

Next, we affirmed the recognition given to the Airport from the publication Airline Weekly as the 2013 fastest growing airport in the U.S. by continuing to increase our air service. We added new airlines including Alaska Airlines with nonstop service to Seattle. Most recently, Allegiant Air announced nonstop service to Cincinnati, OH; Columbus, OH; Indianapolis, IN; and Orlando Sanford, FL starting February 2015 setting a record for the most nonstop destinations the Airport has ever had with a total of 43 nonstop routes. Existing airlines also added new destinations. Southwest began daily service to Washington National and San Diego while adding temporary holiday service to San Antonio during Thanksgiving, which will go to daily service in April 2015. Spirit Airlines began nonstop service to Houston, Ft. Lauderdale, Chicago and Detroit. On the international front, Vacation Express added summer service to Cancun, Mexico and nonstop service to Montego Bay, Jamaica. Vacation Express also announced they would begin weekly nonstop flights to Punta Cana, Dominican Republic in May 2015 and Delta Air Lines announced one weekly departure to Cancun starting in March 2015.

Recognition for air service growth included the Annie Award presented in March from the online airline network news and analysis leader Anna Aero. They recognized Armstrong International as the fastest growing airport between 5 and 10 million passengers in the medium airport category. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) finalized their 2013 passenger boarding (enplanements) data in September and our Airport moved up four spots year over year, from 41 to 37 overall. The accolades continued with Airport Revenue News awarding a certificate of recognition to the Airport for having the best Concessions Management Team for a medium size airport.

On the financial front, our annual audit performed by the professional accounting corporation Postlethwaite & Netterville (P&N) confirmed that the Airport complied in all material respects with requirements issued by the FAA. Most notably, the airlines’ cost per enplaned passenger continues to fall which makes us much more attractive for new and existing airlines to increase air service. Other highlights included:

- Total Non-Airline Revenues increased from $28.2M to $32.7M, an improvement of $4.5M or 16%;
- Total Airline Revenue requirement decreased from $46.5M to $40.8M, an improvement of $5.7M or 12%;
- Total Revenues increased from $107.2M to $113.8M, an improvement of $6.6M or 6.1%;
- Total Current Liabilities declined from $55.8M to $41.2M, an improvement of $14.6M or 26%; and
- Total Non-Current Liabilities declined from $366.7M to $353.1M, an improvement of $13.6M or 3.7%.

Finally, the Airport completed an Economic Impact Study that demonstrated that Armstrong International is a major economic powerhouse for the City, State and Region. The 2014 Economic Impact Study was conducted by local economist Dr. Timothy Ryan. He revealed that the Airport has a $5.3 billion total economic impact and sustains more than 53,300 jobs in the Greater New Orleans regional economy. It also showed that the Airport’s total economic impact will grow to more than $6.3 billion with job projections exceeding 64,400 after the new North Terminal is completed in 2018.

The success we have experienced this year can be attributed to the adoption of a strategic business plan and the hard work of the Airport staff to carry it out. We thank our community for supporting this region’s Airport. Next year is already shaping up to be a banner year and we anxiously await it.

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