



## **MARDI GRAS REVELERS CONVERGE ON NEW ORELANS**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – February 23, 2006, New Orleans – Mardi Gras is upon us at the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport and despite Katrina, we are seeing our seasonal surge in passenger traffic.

Friday, February 24 will kick off the busy Mardi Gras travel season at Armstrong International as people converge on the city for Mardi Gras, but it is also a day when many locals depart to take to the slopes or head out on that family vacation. The Airport is expected to see heavy passenger traffic from Friday, February 24 through Thursday, March 2 with Wednesday, March 1 being the busiest travel day as Mardi Gras visitors depart the City and head home.

Passengers traveling over this holiday period should plan on arriving at the Airport two hours prior to their scheduled departure time. Armstrong International expects all flights to be at capacity throughout the Mardi Gras travel period.

In 2005, Armstrong International saw approximately 18,000 passengers board flights on the busiest days. In 2006, while the number of flights to the city is reduced, the passenger loads on those flights are at an all time high with few, if any, seats available in and out of the city over Mardi Gras. This year, Armstrong is operating with approximately 50% of the flights it had last year but the airlines are responding to the demand. Continental Airlines has added 6 extra flights for the Mardi Gras Holiday and Southwest Airlines has added 18 flights, adding over 3,250 seats over a nine day period. With these extra flight operations, Armstrong will have over 10,000 seats available on Friday, February 24 as revelers come to join the festivities and all the seats are expected to be full.

“While the number of passengers arriving by aircraft is down from last year, we are still very pleased with the response from the airlines with the level of service we are receiving as the city continues in its recovery,” stated Director of Aviation Roy A. Williams. “In years past, there were still seats available to fly in for the Mardi Gras holiday, this year, we expect all flights to be at capacity.”

People coming to pick up arriving passengers at Armstrong International are encouraged to park in the Short-Term Airport Parking Garage and meet their passengers in the terminal and avoid circling the roadway system that is expected to be congested. Rates for the Short-term Airport Parking Garage are \$2.00 for the first hour and \$2.00 for each additional half-hour or portion thereof. The daily maximum is \$15. The Long-term Parking Garage is also available at a daily rate of \$10.00.

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