

For Immediate Release
September 7, 2018

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First Week of September a Good Week for the Airport

Piedmont Triad – The first week of September was a big week for Piedmont Triad International Airport.

In the space of 48 hours, PTI added Spirit Airlines to its roster of passenger airlines, and saw FedEx increase its cargo presence at the airport hub by adding eight jets to its daily compliment. The increased activity that began on September 4th at FedEx will also add about 400 new employees at the airport hub.

“This has been a good week for PTI, but more important, it has been a great week for the region,” said Steve Showfety, the Chairman of the Airport Authority. “We are very excited about the growth at FedEx. We are equally excited to add a new low-cost airline to our family of airlines.”

Crowds celebrated the airline’s debut at the airport Thursday with contests, give-aways, ribbon cuttings and a water cannon salute to the first arriving Spirit aircraft, which pulled into the PTI gate at 9:01 a.m. Thursday from Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Spirit will have regular service to three Florida cities – Fort Lauderdale, Orlando and Tampa.

Enplanements at the airport have been increasing steadily month after month at the airport through the first three quarters of 2018. The new Spirit service, which will add about 10 flights a week initially, will boost those numbers even more.

More important, Spirit could eventually add even more non-stop destinations to those already offered by the airport. Spirit Airlines flies to more than 65 destinations across the country and beyond, including destinations in the Caribbean and Central America.

“Spirit is an ultra-low-cost carrier that has the potential to bring service not only to Florida, but to other cities in its network if our community supports the airline,” said Kevin Baker, the Airport’s Executive Director. “Success in these markets could lead to other non-stop destinations, which is what the community is always eager to see.”

On the cargo side, the FedEx hub has grown steadily since it opened at the airport in 2009. The current spike in activity at the hub will be dramatic: It will double the FedEx workforce and have a significant impact on the amount of cargo that is handled at PTI.

“The growth at the FedEx hub will have a big impact on our cargo numbers,” Baker said. To put the impact in perspective, Baker says the airport’s projections for cargo handled at PTI over the next year have tripled from what they were before the FedEx announcement last month. Growth at the hub will also have other important impacts, some tangible and some less tangible, Baker said.

“It will have a positive impact on local employment. It will have a positive impact on our ability to attract new industry. It will have a positive impact on the local tax base. It will have a positive impact on the amount of revenue generated by this airport.”

“It has been a busy, but good week!”



Water cannon salute for the first arriving Spirit aircraft at Piedmont Triad International Airport

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