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Media Contact Line: (414) 519-8482

MKE AIRPORT EXCEEDS 6 MILLION PASSENGERS IN 2023

Milwaukee's hometown airport soars into 2024 with more travelers and more flights

MILWAUKEE (January 31, 2024) – Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport (MKE) is reflecting on a successful 2023—a year in which the Airport reached a new milestone in passenger traffic numbers, added new air service and concessions, and received award recognition for its outstanding customer experience and marketing programs.

“In 2023, Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport delivered results and continued to improve its world-class customer experience with the addition of new air service and concession offerings,” said the Milwaukee County Executive. “With more people flying in 2023, the team at MKE made it easy for our community to achieve their travel dreams right here in Milwaukee County. I am looking forward to celebrating more successes at our hometown airport in the future.”

MKE welcomed 6,015,731 travelers in 2023, up 10.6% from 2022. The year of growth also marks the first time the Airport has served six million passengers since before the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Multiple airlines have added nonstop flights to new destinations, giving Milwaukee-area travelers more reasons to fly MKE,” said Airport Director Brian Dranzik. “Our sustained passenger growth reflects the increasing desire to travel as the industry continues to rebound from the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

More Travelers, More Places to Fly

Milwaukee-area travelers are enjoying the addition of multiple new nonstop routes. Last summer, [Delta Air Lines](#) brought back nonstop flights to Salt Lake City while [Southwest Airlines](#) reinstated daily nonstop service to Kansas City. The return of both flights was eagerly anticipated by MKE travelers, as both routes were previously put on pause during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Even more destinations became available heading into the latter half of the year as [American Airlines](#) launched new twice-daily nonstop service to Washington D.C. and daily seasonal service to Miami. With convenient flight times perfect for business travel, the new flights to D.C. proved especially timely as Milwaukee prepares to welcome thousands of travelers for the Republican National Convention in July of 2024.



[Sun Country Airlines](#) also joined in with a major winter expansion of flights from MKE to warm-weather destinations like Cancun, Fort Myers, Orlando, and Phoenix.

MKE Adds Concessions Inspired by Local Neighborhood

Paying homage to the city of Milwaukee, MKE and award-winning airport concessionaire Paradies Lagardère celebrated the grand opening of a new Milwaukee-inspired concession option, Concordia Market. As an extension of the Airport’s successful Vino Volo restaurant, the latest addition gave travelers a new choice for fresh-made food items, Milwaukee-based brands, grab-and-go options, locally brewed [Anodyne Coffee](#), and a variety of healthy gluten-free, keto, and organic treats.



The name of the new concession option pays homage to Milwaukee’s Historic Concordia Neighborhood, which dates to the 1850’s and is known for its large, elegant Victorian homes.

Milwaukee County Supports Hometown with New Employee Travel Requirement

2023 also brought the introduction of a new travel policy designed to help drive more travel through MKE and promote economic growth in the Milwaukee area. The Milwaukee County Executive introduced a new policy requiring Milwaukee County employees to begin and end their travel at Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport every time they fly for business.

As the state’s largest airport, and a major driver of tourism in southeast Wisconsin, the new policy was a logical change to promote growth in Wisconsin instead of in Illinois. The more travelers choose MKE, the easier it is for airlines to add more flights to more places. The new policy was announced at a kickoff event with VISIT Milwaukee during National Travel & Tourism week.

Two Years in a Row, MKE Wins Big

Repeating its success from 2022, the Airport once again received international recognition for its outstanding customer experience in 2023. The Airport was awarded an Airport Service Quality Award for Best Airport North America from Airports Council International, for the second year in a row. The repeat win was notable because the award is determined through independent surveys completed by travelers while they are at the Airport.

And, the customer experience isn’t the only thing MKE was recognized for in 2023. The Airport also earned the highest airport industry award for marketing and public relations, the [Peggy G. Hereford Award](#). MKE earned the accolade at the Airports Council International – North America MarComCX Awards after securing the most first-place wins across multiple marketing and public relations categories, beating out over 300 category submissions from airports throughout North America.



Now Boarding, Read All About It!

In an effort to help Milwaukee travelers start their next adventure off on the right foot, MKE created its first-ever airport magazine. *Now Boarding* offers readers the latest travel tips and tricks, information about MKE's nonstop destinations, amenities, airport fun facts, and more.

The piece was distributed alongside Milwaukee Magazine and the Business Journal. It was also placed in every seat back on board the Amtrak Hiawatha trains. Hard copies of the publication are still available at the Airport, and a digital version can be found on [MKE's website](#).



Flying Into 2024

In 2024, Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport will welcome new destinations and increase flights to existing destinations. Tickets for all new and existing destinations are on sale now.

New 2024 Routes Already Announced

- Raleigh-Durham – [Frontier Airlines](#) (3x/week service beginning May 16)
- San Diego – [Southwest Airlines](#) (Saturday service beginning Jun 8)

Passenger numbers are expected to increase as Milwaukee welcomes the Republican National Convention. The return of the Great Lakes cruise season, including the Viking Octantis and the Viking Polaris, will bring an influx of leisure travelers. Golfers from throughout the world will flock to Wisconsin's world-class courses; and sports tourism with NBA superstar Giannis Antetokounmpo will be a big draw for Milwaukee this upcoming year. Additionally, major summer events like the Harley-Davidson Homecoming Festival, Northwestern Mutual's Annual Meeting, and numerous other corporate and industry conventions will draw inbound flight passengers to Milwaukee.

Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport offers nonstop flights to 30+ destinations coast-to-coast, and more than 200 international destinations are available with one easy connection. MKE is served by Alaska, American, Delta, Frontier, JetBlue, Southwest, Spirit, Sun Country, and United. The complete list of nonstop cities can be found at flymke.com.

MKE, the winner of 2021 and 2022 ASQ Best Airport – North America awards for outstanding customer experience, is owned by Milwaukee County and operated by the Department of Transportation, Airport Division, under the policy direction of the Milwaukee County Executive and the County Board of Supervisors. The Airport is entirely funded by user fees; no property tax dollars are used for the Airport's capital improvements or for its day-to-day operation.

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