News Release

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Contact:

Jeff Lea
MAC Strategic Communications
jeff.lea@mspmac.org
314-793-4240

MSP Airport gears up for busy MEA travel week
Passenger demand during annual fall break continues to grow

MSP is expecting more than 52,000 people to clear security at MSP Airport on Thursday, the peak day of MEA week. Credit: Metropolitan Airports Commission

MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL, Minn. — Fall travel will peak this week at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP), with high levels of passengers expected to pass through the airport thanks to families opting to travel during the annual MEA break for many schools this Thursday and Friday.

Thursday, Oct. 17, is expected to be the busiest day this week, with more than 52,000 people forecast to pass through Transportation Security Administration (TSA) security checkpoints. The second busiest day is expected to be Wednesday, Oct. 16, with more than 49,000 people forecast to clear checkpoints. MEA week travel closes out in general on Sunday, Oct. 20. These high volumes will drive up activity in terminal baggage claims, terminal loading zones, and parking ramps.

"Thursday is expected to be our busiest day of a busy week as more Minnesotans take the opportunity to fly during MEA break," said Brian Ryks, CEO of the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC), which operates MSP. "We expect to see high volumes of passengers in our ticketing lobbies, and corresponding activity along our roadways for passenger drop-off and pick-up."

In advance of this year's MEA travel period, the MAC opened an alternative pick-up and drop-off area at Terminal 2. The free Terminal 2 Express Lane is accessed through the Purple Ramp, with a covered loading zone on the second level offering quick access to the terminal via a sky bridge.

MSP airlines, TSA and the MAC have increased staffing levels to assist travelers and reduce wait times for check-in and security processes. Travelers are encouraged to arrive at the airport at least two hours in advance of a domestic departure or three hours prior to an international departure.

Here are some other helpful tips for MEA week travel at MSP:

- MSP passengers can reserve a spot in the security line for free through MSP RESERVE. This fall, the program was expanded to include Terminal 1 passengers. Reservation times vary per terminal and availability is limited.

- Parking will be in high demand. Travelers can prebook parking online to guarantee a spot and capture the lowest daily rates. Bookings must be made at least 12 hours prior to scheduled arrival time.

- Travelers in Terminal 1 should check the checkpoint wait-time boards when they enter the ticketing lobby. Passengers can access all gates from either checkpoint, but the North Checkpoint often has shorter wait times.

- During busy times, drivers can go up or down to Terminal 1's departures or arrivals levels to pick up or drop off passengers.

- To reduce traffic at curbside pick-up areas, drivers waiting for passengers are encouraged to use MSP's cell phone lots on Post Road. These are free waiting areas for drivers who are encouraged to stay parked until their arriving party contacts them to pick them up at either terminal.

- Get the latest TSA security screening information and tips including identification requirements and regulated items for carry-on and checked baggage.

MSP will be celebrating MEA week with a series of passenger activities on the two busiest departure days, including music performances from Arts@ MSP, Paul Bunyan appearances, kids activities and a "Fossil Friends" interactive display from the Science Museum of Minnesota.

About The Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC)

The Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) owns and operates one of the nation's largest airport systems, including Minneapolis-St Paul International Airport (MSP) and six general aviation airports. The MAC's airports connect the region to the world and showcase Minnesota's extraordinary culture to millions of passengers from around the globe who arrive or depart through MAC airports each year. Though a public corporation of the state of Minnesota, the organization is not funded by income or property taxes. Instead, the MAC's operations are funded by rents and fees generated by users of its airports. For more information, visit www.metroairports.org.

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