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## Bob Hope Airport summer passenger numbers take off

By Jason Kandel, Staff Writer

BURBANK - Record numbers of travelers flew in and out of the Bob Hope Airport this summer, brought by an improved economy and more flights by two new carriers, JetBlue and Delta Air Lines.

Nearly 1.5 million passengers traveled through the Burbank airport between June and August, compared with 1.3 million in the same months last year, records show.

August travel set a record: 521,217 travelers, up from 457,894 in August 2004 and even 16 percent more than August 2001, the month before the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks slashed air travel.

"We're glad to see the traveling public back in force," said airport spokesman Victor Gill. "Our challenge is to keep giving them the airport convenience that they have come to expect over time. This is definitely above and beyond what we had going on prior to 9-11."

While Bob Hope's numbers jumped, LAX's numbers remained flat. Some 17.4 million travelers used LAX this summer and last summer, statistics show.

"International traffic came in over forecast, but domestic traffic was flat because the airlines were trimming their schedules because of much higher fuel prices and the precarious financial condition of the so-called legacy carriers," said Tom Winfrey, a spokesman at LAX. "We think traffic will increase next year."

More jets as well as more people used Bob Hope this summer.

In August, the airport had more than 5,700 flights among 10 carriers, compared with 5,320 in August 2004.

JetBlue, which on May 24 began offering three daily nonstop flights between Burbank and New York, carried 97,116 passengers through Aug. 31, according to airport statistics.

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"JetBlue is pleased to the response from its customers," said carrier spokeswoman Jenny Dervin.

Delta Air Lines began offering a daily nonstop flight to Atlanta and flights to Salt Lake City through SkyWest in January. Its planes carried 29,658 passengers through Bob Hope Airport in June, July and August, statistics show.

Southwest Airlines is the biggest user of Bob Hope Airport and usually accounts for more than 65 percent of passenger traffic, airport officials said. In June, July and August it carried 919,733 passengers in and out of Burbank.

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The Burbank airport's all-time high was 4.9 million travelers in 1995. The airport had 4.7 million in 2003 and was just below the 1995 record in 2004.

Jack Kyser, the chief economist for the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corp. said the summer travel season was good to Southern California. But, he said, questions remain over whether the trend can survive rising fuel prices worsened by the Gulf Coast hurricanes.

"The fuel market is a major concern," he said. "It's very volatile."

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