



Mario Diaz, City of Houston Aviation Director, delivers State of Airports address before the Partnership

The Greater Houston Partnership welcomed Mario Diaz, City of Houston Aviation Director, for the annual State of the Airports address on Monday, March 23 at the Royal Sonesta Hotel. Diaz discussed the future of air transportation in Houston and long-term planning for the airport system.

“There has been near constant activity with our airports,” said Bob Harvey, Partnership President and CEO, during his opening remarks. “This increased connectivity is key for Houston, both economically and culturally,” said Harvey.

Diaz opened his remarks by stating that “the state of the airport system in Houston is as good as it’s ever been.” He added, “Houston Airport System will do everything possible to support positioning Houston as key player on the global stage.” Since June 2010, the airport system has brought more than 10 foreign-flag carriers to Houston.

Houston’s airports set a record last year with more than 53 million passengers passing through the system. Globally, 9.8 million travelers went through IAH, double the rate in 2000. In 2014 alone, travel to Asia and Africa increased 55 percent, and travel to Europe increased 10 percent.

Houston Airport System has also filed its application to become nation’s 10th licensed commercial spaceport. “Ellington is on the way to solidifying leadership in aerospace and receiving licensing to convert it to a space port,” said Diaz.

Hobby Airport will open a \$156 million, five-gate international terminal this October. Southwest Airlines, which is primarily funding the project, will add several flights to Latin America.

Construction is slated to begin in 2017 for the new Terminal D at Bush Intercontinental, which is projected to be completed in 2020. Budget airline Spirit Air will be second most active airline at Bush Intercontinental after expansion this year.

