

The Columbus Dispatch

November 11, 2010

Airport shares record revenue

Money to cut airlines' fees at Port Columbus

By Marla Matzer Rose THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Port Columbus will share a record amount of revenue with airlines under a deal that took effect this year.

The nine carriers operating at the airport will receive a combined \$5.5 million in credit, which they can apply to the fees they pay the airport. Columbus Regional Airport Authority board members approved the amount as part of the organization's 2011 budget.

"The authority's philosophy of managing costs and sharing revenues clearly benefits central Ohio travelers by helping to create an environment conducive for airlines to expand service," Elaine Roberts, president and CEO of the airport authority, said in a statement issued by the board.

Hank Moody, general manager of corporate real estate for Delta Air Lines, called the move "refreshing" and said it was much appreciated.

"There is a strong correlation between airport costs and air-service levels and Columbus is well-positioned to growth with their effective approach," he said.

The airport has shared revenue with the airlines for more than a decade, but previous agreements called for fixed dollar amounts. The most recent five-year deal called for sharing 75 percent of net airport revenue (after money was set aside for a capital reserve fund), with no cap.

The board also approved changes to the airport's food concessions, which are expected to occur early next year. The Auntie Anne's pretzel franchise will move into an empty spot behind security in the B concourse, while Tim Hortons will move into space in the pre-security food court in the B concourse. Famous Famiglia will close in the food court, while another tenant there, Great American Bagel Bakery Co., will move to Concourse C.

Port Columbus' passenger numbers continued to climb slightly in October, with 2.1 percent more passengers — 558,285 compared with 546,779 the previous October — using the airport. For the year to date, passenger totals were 5.3 million, up 1.8 percent over the same 10-month period last year.

Rickenbacker airport had a 3 percent year-over-year decrease in cargo shipments in October.

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