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Fort Smith airport traffic sees steep January decline

Submitted by **The City Wire staff** on Tue, 02/24/2009 - 11:14am.

Traffic at the Fort Smith Regional Airport continues a steep decline, with January enplanements dipping 20.9% compared to January 2008.

According to information on the airport's Web site, there were 5,450 enplanements in January 2009 compared to 6,896 in January 2008.

Passenger enplanements at the Fort Smith Regional Airport totaled 87,030 in 2008, down 12.2 percent from the 99,127 enplanements in 2007. The 2008 traffic total is the lowest at the airport in the past 10 years.

American operates five flights a day — all connecting to Dallas-Fort Worth — out of Fort Smith. Northwest has three flights a day to Memphis, and Delta has one flight a day to Atlanta.

The decline in enplanement traffic is not just a Fort Smith problem — it's a global problem tied directly to recessionary conditions in many countries.

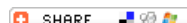
A recent report from London-based **Ascend** noted that a record total of almost 2,300 jet airliners are now parked. According to the report, 1,167 aircraft were grounded last year, making 2008 the worst year for global airline cutbacks since 2001.

"The aviation fleet data shows that at least 400 more aircraft are scheduled to be cut during 2009, with groundings being announced almost daily. This is having a negative effect on aircraft values and lease rates, and creating real challenges for the aircraft financing community," said Chris Seymour, head of market analysis at Ascend.

North American carriers have announced fleet reductions totaling almost 800 aircraft since mid-2008.

"Some reduction in capacity is typical over winter months as passenger traffic decreases. But this season's fleet cuts were far more severe than those of the recent past," Seymour said in the report.

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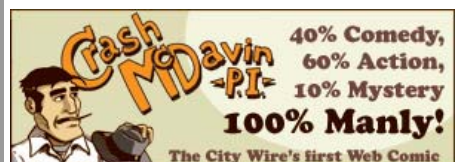
Guest Commentary

Working to empty the bases

Fort Smith City Director Gary Campbell outlines his involvement in and hopes for city government.



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Upcoming events

- A Tennis Night in America: Youth Registration Night** (11 hours)
 - Moonlight and Magnolias** (3 days)
 - Lawn & Garden Show at the Ft. Smith Convention Center** (4 days)
 - The Way of the Master One-Day Evangelism Crash Course** (5 days)
 - YEL's Black and White Ball - featuring Ultra Suede** (5 days)
 - Fort Smith Trolley Museum** (6 days)
- [more](#)

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- **Because it's acceptable Ray.**
8 hours 6 min ago
- **YES, a lack of awareness**
12 hours 46 min ago
- **Awesome!**
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1 day 4 hours ago
- **Agree**
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1 day 8 hours ago