

## **Airlines idling more planes as they cut capacity**

**The Associated Press**

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DALLAS - As the global recession reduces air travel, the world's airlines have idled more than 11 percent of their fleets and it's likely to get worse, an aviation consulting firm said Tuesday.

London-based consultant Ascend said airlines last year parked 1,167 planes, the highest number since 2001, which was marked by recession and terror attacks on jetliners.

Airlines have now grounded nearly 2,300 aircraft of their 20,293 planes, and the percentage of idled aircraft could soon match the 13 percent reached at the end of 2001, the consultants said.

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

Airlines are still taking delivery of new planes, however. Seymour said carriers were likely to add about 1,000 new aircraft this year — if they can arrange financing. As a result, he said, they are parking older planes to limit capacity.

North American carriers have announced reductions of nearly 800 aircraft since mid-2008. European airlines have idled more than 450, and Asian and Pacific carriers have grounded at least 230, according to Ascend.

In the Middle East, however, Emirates airline announced it plans to boost capacity 14 percent this year.

Ascend said one beneficiary of the airlines' cutbacks is the aircraft-storage business, mostly based in the deserts of Arizona and California.

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