

Airport Check-in

Every Monday

Los Angeles

Regional airport revival

Los Angeles city officials approved this month a proposal to restart commercial service at Palmdale Regional Airport. They hope to recruit an airline that will start service in 2007 and provide daily jet connections to a hub airport somewhere in the West.

Located 60 miles northeast of downtown Los Angeles, Palmdale Regional has a 9,000-square-foot terminal and can handle up to 300,000 passengers annually. The airport, which is now used by the Air Force, shut down its commercial service earlier this year when Scenic Airlines ended its flights to Las Vegas.

Over the years, the airport has had intermittent commercial service, including United Express in the late 1990s. It hasn't been able to attract enough flights to keep it going steadily, spokeswoman Nancy Castles says.

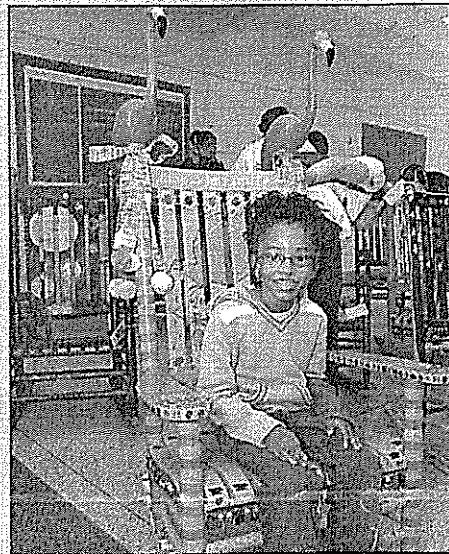
With a rapid population growth in the region, city officials believe the time is right for the airport, Castles says. Commercial service at Palmdale could help relieve passenger and automobile traffic at Los Angeles International, she says.

Washington

Dealing with full lots

With its parking lots and garages often full on weekdays, Reagan Washington National is offering travelers valet service. At a lot near the airport entrance, travelers may leave their cars with attendants, who will do the parking. Shuttles take customers to the terminals. Fees: \$40 for the first day; \$30 for the next two days and \$25 for each following day.

The airport is also making parking information available in real time at its website, www.mwaa.com. Click on the streaming message at the top of the page and see parking space availability at the lots and garages. While the number of spaces changes constantly, the airport is hoping that more travelers would elect not to drive if the lots are close to being full.



Kira Fox, 6: Sits in the chair she designed.

Chicago

Decorated rockers make debut

Add Chicago Midway to the list of airports featuring rocking chairs for travelers. Patients at La Rabida Children's Hospital in Chicago are decorating rockers that are being placed throughout the airport. On the rockers, La Rabida's kids portray imagined destinations, like rain forests or the Land of Oz. More than a half-dozen airports have added rockers. Charlotte Douglas began the trend nearly a decade ago.

rants that offer at least one vegetarian entrée that is low in fat, high in fiber and cholesterol-free. Orlando won because 38 of 39 restaurants offer such items.

Houston Bush Intercontinental won the "most improved" category. Las Vegas McCarran, with its numerous hot dog stands and cocktail lounges, came in last place for the third year in a row.

Cleveland

Rewards for litter picker-uppers

Starting Jan. 1, Cleveland Hopkins will award \$20 coupons to travelers picking up litter at the airport. Its volunteers and janitors will issue the coupons, which can be redeemed at most of the airport's restaurants and shops. The airport hasn't set a limit on the number of coupons to be issued, and the campaign will run indefinitely, spokeswoman Pat Smith says.

It is part of a broader campaign by the airport to spiff up and attract more travelers. It recently upgraded the restrooms in Concourse C with new furnishings and tiles and added family restrooms for travelers with kids.

Boston

New 5,000-foot runway opens

Boston's Logan opened its sixth runway last week, 30 years after it was initially proposed. The 5,000-foot runway, in the southeastern quadrant of the airport, is the shortest and is used for regional jets and other small planes. The runway is expected to reduce delays by 25%, spokesman Richard Walsh says.

Local residents had protested the runway, arguing that it would bring noise and pollution. The airport began construction in 2003 after a judge lifted an injunction obtained by opponents.

Orlando

Airports rated for healthy food

Orlando ranks at the top among big U.S. airports for healthy food options, according to the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine. In its annual survey, it ranked 13 of the busiest airports based on the number of restaurants that offer at least one vegetarian entrée that is low in fat, high in fiber and cholesterol-free. Orlando won because 38 of 39 restaurants offer such items.