

A Positive Outlook

A Community Built on Customer Service

For 20 million visitors each year, the Las Vegas experience doesn't start in a hotel lobby; it starts at a gate at McCarran International Airport. As the gateway to Southern Nevada for nearly half of our annual visitors, McCarran has become perhaps the single most important component of the region's thriving tourism economy. Today, the nation's ninth-busiest airport is as popular as ever, closing 2018 with a record 49.7 million passengers and surpassing 50 million passengers over a 12-month period earlier this year, putting it on track for yet another annual record.

The airport's track record of growth is not an accident. It takes a thriving hospitality industry to stoke passenger demand. It takes foresight, planning and commitment to build facilities to accommodate current and future needs. It takes the right mix of restaurants, shops and other amenities to satisfy travelers. It takes coordinated and well-run services to handle passenger needs from curb to gate. And, perhaps not as obvious, it takes a customer-first mindset.

McCarran International Airport embodies that mindset, a reflection of our tourist-based economy that is unreservedly dependent on the same. This city was built on its ability to open our doors and our arms, welcome anyone from anywhere, and provide them with an experience that keeps them coming back. McCarran is no different. Visitors to Southern Nevada don't come here for the airport, but it is a vital part of the overall experience and is treated as such. The passengers have noticed.

Each year, renowned analytics firm J.D. Power surveys tens of thousands of travelers about their satisfaction with domestic airports. McCarran consistently ranks near the top, and in 2018, it climbed to the top spot among the nation's busiest airports, earning the nation's highest overall marks for customer satisfaction. Interestingly, McCarran tied with the airport in Orlando, another tourism-focused destination, which only underscores the relative importance of hospitality. The customer service culture at McCarran starts with Rosemary Vassiliadis, the director of the Clark County Department of Aviation. "I believe it's our commitment to customer service that our travelers notice and appreciate," she said of the J.D. Power rankings.

The customer service ethos that pervades Southern Nevada is a kind of social intelligence that has been key to the region's successful

hospitality industry, according to Bo Bernhard, executive director of the UNLV International Gaming Institute. Thanks to what he calls "hospitality neurons," the waiters, clerks, cashiers and other frontline workers in the tourism industry are better able to read their customers and adapt to their needs, ensuring a pleasant and fulfilling experience. This elevated hospitality quotient is not merely a competitive advantage; it is the most indispensable element of our economic success.



Jeremy Aguero, Principal Analyst

Las Vegas is what it is today thanks to its ability to read its customers and adapt and evolve to meet their ever-changing needs. This is as true for a resort on the Strip as it is for McCarran International Airport, which is the first and last stop for millions of people coming to enjoy the Las Vegas experience. To the roughly 18,000 dedicated men and women who work at McCarran every day; to the airline partners who have demonstrated a vested interest in McCarran's long-run success; to the cab, Uber and Lyft drivers who make getting in and out of the airport as easy as anywhere in the country, and to the elected officials and airport administrators whose vision and diligence transformed McCarran from a dusty air field that served 35,000 passengers in 1949 to an international airport that will serve over 50 million passengers in 2019—congratulations on your recent recognition and success, and thank you for being such an important element of ours.

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