



## WASHINGTON AVIATION SUMMARY

### SEPTEMBER 2026 EDITION

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The Kirstein & Young law firm specializes in representing U.S. and foreign airlines, airports, leasing companies, financial institutions and aviation-related companies before U.S. Government agencies, Congress, the courts and in commercial and financing matters.

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## **I. REGULATORY NEWS**

### **1. FAA Deputy Administrator Chris Rocheleau Returns To NBAA.**

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Deputy Administrator Christopher Rocheleau resumed his position as COO of the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA). Before joining NBAA in 2022 he held executive roles at FAA, and in January 2025 returned to FAA as Acting Administrator, a title he held until the July 2025 confirmation of Bryan Bedford.

### **2. Appeals Court Allows Delta-Aeromexico Joint Venture.**

A U.S. appeals court overturned a U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) order to repeal the Delta-Aeromexico joint venture, allowing the carriers to continue coordinating flights between the U.S. and Mexico. DOT approved the joint venture and granted it antitrust immunity in 2016, but in 2025 determined it was anti-competitive. The 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals agreed with the carriers that the order was “arbitrary and capricious,” and said DOT “did not reasonably explain why it conducted a far more limited market analysis in this case than it has always done in the past or why it imposed a requirement for approval of the joint venture that it did not require of similar joint ventures it approved in Japan.”

### **3. DOT Extends Comment Period For Proposed Full Fare Advertising Rule.**

DOT extended the comment period for the proposed Full Fare Advertising Rule from July 31 to August 21. Airlines for America (A4A) was among those requesting an extension, contending that the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) raises many complex issues, including Constitutional law and the interplay between the authorities of DOT and other agencies, that require further study. Over 1000 comments were submitted including by *e.g.* Airlines for America, the Association of Value Airlines, IATA, Southwest Airlines, National Consumers League, Truth in Advertising, Sata Internacional Airlines, and Travel Agent Association.

### **4. FAA Certifies Boeing 737 MAX-7.**

FAA issued an amended type certificate for the Boeing 737 MAX-7, confirming the aircraft complies with all applicable design and safety requirements, and an updated Production Limitation Record, which authorizes Boeing to begin production of the aircraft. Before granting approval, FAA required updates to the flight-control software, flightcrew alerting system, and a redesigned engine anti-ice system, changes that provide pilots clearer information and warnings and prevent the engine inlet from overheating and potentially weakening the

surrounding structure. FAA safety inspectors will remain on site at Boeing production facilities to closely monitor the manufacturing process, including observing and assessing Boeing's Safety Management System (SMS) and safety culture.

**5. Battery Incidents on Passenger Flights Continue to Rise.**

Thermal runaway incidents on passenger flights rose 15% from 2024 to 2025, according to a UL Standards & Engagement (ULSE) report, "Lithium-ion Battery Incidents in Aviation: 2025 Data Review." Portable charger incidents increased by 42%, making them the leading device involved in incidents, surpassing 2024's e-cigarettes. Cell phones are third. Incident data was shared by more than 40 airlines. ULSE estimates a cost of \$7.3 million in damages and loss from 2021-2024, an average \$1.8 million per year, and an estimated \$96,000 per incident in damage, disruption, and associated losses. . . . International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) lithium battery-powered power bank specifications, effective March 27, 2026, limited devices to two per passenger, and passengers are prohibited from recharging them during flights. Crew may carry and use power banks in line with operational requirements of the aircraft. . . . FAA has recorded 58 lithium battery incidents aboard passenger aircraft so far in 2026. In August, a passenger was treated and released after a laptop caught fire aboard an American Airlines flight on approach to Dallas Fort Worth, filling the Airbus A321 cabin with smoke and prompting flight attendants to contain the device with a thermal containment bag. A laptop fire on an American Airlines aircraft earlier this year prompted a full evacuation via emergency slides and jet bridge, with three minor injuries reported from the evacuation. . . . An analysis reported by Insurance Business identified lithium battery risk as systemic rather than episodic, noting that the insured peril can originate from a consumer power bank, an incorrectly declared battery shipment or a compliant freight pallet. The average U.S. traveler carries four battery-powered devices per flight. Spread across hundreds of passengers on a modern widebody, that is a meaningful aggregate exposure per departure. "A peril is becoming routine rather than rare," says the aviation insurance industry. "A risk rising in frequency while remaining largely non-fatal is exactly the kind of exposure that shows up first in underwriting scrutiny and risk control requirements, well before it produces a headline catastrophic loss."

## **II. AIRPORTS**

### **1. FAA Investments In Airport Infrastructure Improvements.**

FAA is investing \$870 million in airport infrastructure improvements with 339 grants to airports in 44 states and two territories. Grants include \$289 million to Los Angeles International for a new terminal access road; \$50 million to Miami International to reconstruct the terminal roof; and \$9.1 million to Akron-Canton to rehabilitate passenger bridges and reconstruct some facilities. . . . Another \$615 million investment included \$21.5 million to Midland International Air & Space Port in Texas for runway rehabilitation; \$19.5 million to construct a new airport in Noatak, Alaska; \$15.3 million to San Diego International for noise mitigation; and \$2.4 million to Sacramento International for new passenger boarding bridges.

### **2. Dulles Board Approves \$20 Billion Airport Renovation.**

Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) approved \$15.5 billion to help fund the \$19.9 billion renovation of Washington Dulles International; \$4.4 billion was authorized earlier. The project, announced by the Trump Administration in late July, will be funded primarily through municipal bonds, said MWAA CEO Jack Potter. United is a partner in the project, which will preserve architect Eero Saarinen's iconic terminal design. Construction will begin next year and continue for more than a decade.

### **3. Two Renovated Gates Reopen At O'Hare Terminal 3.**

Renovated Gates K1 and L2A at Chicago O'Hare reopened and were turned over to American Airlines, as work advances toward summer 2027 completion of the \$300 million ElevateT3 project. The project, supported by \$90 million in federal grants and airline charges, is proceeding in phases so Terminal 3 can operate throughout construction. . . . Groundbreaking on first phase of new Concourse E at O'Hare was moved forward to begin later this year, advancing the next major stage of the \$8.8 billion ORDNext modernization program and creating capacity needed to accelerate construction of the O'Hare Global Terminal. Under the revised sequence, Concourse D will be completed in 2028, the first 14 gates of Concourse E in 2030, the O'Hare Global Terminal in 2033 and the final ten gates of Concourse E in 2034.

### **4. Interest In Renaming Nashville To Honor Dolly Parton.**

Interest in renaming Nashville International in honor of Dolly Parton is increasing since her death on August 25. State legislator Todd Warner (R-Chapel Hill)

reportedly plans to introduce legislation to rename the airport Dolly Parton International.

5. **SMR-4 Installed at Newark, Washington National.**

FAA has installed Surface Movement Radar Model 4 (SMR-4) at Newark and Reagan Washington. Six airports now have the new technology, which will help controllers prevent incursions by allowing them to better track aircraft and vehicles on runways and taxiways in all weather and visibility conditions.

6. **France Plans €8.2 Billion Investment In Airports.**

The French government and Groupe ADP (Aéroports de Paris) agreed to roll out an €8.2 billion investment program over the next eight years “to boost the competitiveness of airports in the Paris region and support the growth of airlines.” Negotiations with the civil aviation ministry, dialogue with airlines and technical discussions with the regulator established “a balance between investment, competitiveness and fair return on capital employed, averaging 5.8% over the term of the agreement.”

7. **London Gatwick, Luton Projects Cleared.**

An appeals court rejected challenges brought by opponents of London Gatwick’s Northern Runway Project, which won government approval in September 2025. “This final ruling means that we can now press on with the important job of bringing this exciting project to life and move forward into the design and delivery phase,” said Gatwick CEO Pierre-Hugues Schmit. . . . Luton Rising, the Luton Council company that owns London Luton Airport and associated assets, said it cleared all legal processes to deliver its plan to increase annual capacity from 19 million passengers to 32 million by the mid-2040s through phased construction of additional terminal capacity, piers, stands and associated airfield and landside infrastructure.

8. **Sydney Airport Master Plan Approved.**

The Australian government approved Sydney Airport’s Master Plan 2045, which forecasts 72 million passengers annually by 2045 and incorporates a five-year environment strategy. . . . Grimshaw and Mott MacDonald were named lead consultants for the T2-T3 terminal project, part of the airport’s \$6 billion capital works program over the next five years. Global construction company, Multiplex, will provide planning and delivery expertise.

### **III. SECURITY AND DATA PRIVACY**

#### **1. David Cummins Confirmed As TSA Administrator.**

David Cummins was sworn in as eighth Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), following confirmation by the Senate. As an executive with government contractor Serco, he had extensive experience collaborating with federal agencies and private sector partners.

#### **2. TSA Launches Horizon 25 Strategy.**

As TSA's 25th anniversary approaches, new Administrator Cummins introduced the Horizon 25 Strategy, which intends to enhance TSA PreCheck®, improve the passenger experience, streamline acquisition of new technology, expand capabilities to counter the threat of unmanned aircraft systems and accelerate public-private partnerships with industry leaders across sectors. "An evolved Screening Partnership Program will replace TSA Gold+ to better harness the role of the private sector in delivering a safer, more secure, and more efficient aviation system," said Cummins, who will bring together innovators and groundbreakers from across the agency, including field and headquarters personnel, to rapidly advance initiatives.

## IV. TECHNOLOGY AND EQUIPMENT

### 1. Archer Acquires Boeing Units In New Collaboration.

Boeing agreed to make a \$55 million equity investment in Archer Aviation, which will acquire Boeing units Wisk Aero, SkyGrid and Insitu, subject to regulatory approvals. Wisk designs, builds and flies electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft; SkyGrid has built a ground-based, aircraft-agnostic air traffic management solution; and Insitu designs, develops and manufactures uncrewed aircraft systems used in intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance. Boeing and Archer also are entering into a collaboration and technology-sharing arrangement through which Boeing will retain access to the Wisk core autonomous flight technology for its current and next-generation commercial and defense aircraft.

### 2. Archer, AEG To Develop Vertiport At L.A. LIVE.

Archer and AEG announced a multi-year partnership and collaboration to develop a vertiport at L.A. LIVE, AEG's sports and entertainment district in downtown Los Angeles. Archer is official air taxi provider for the LA28 Games and Team USA.

### 3. Joby, Atoms Partner To Develop Vertiport Network.

Joby Aviation and Atoms Real Estate formed a strategic partnership to acquire and develop vertiports to serve electric aircraft, autonomous ground vehicles, and ridesharing services. They initially will focus on markets where Joby is preparing early operations—Florida, New York, Texas and California. . . . Joby opened a 45,000-square-foot facility at Perot Field Fort Worth Alliance to support electric air taxi operations across the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex.

### 4. Hybrid-Electric Demonstration Flights Conducted Between Airports.

Hybrid-electric airplane manufacturer Electra, Pennsylvania DOT and New Jersey DOT conducted demonstration flights to test routes connecting small local airports to major airline hubs. The flights began at Manassas, Virginia, stopped at Millville Executive Airport, Atlantic City Bader Field and Northeast Philadelphia Airport, and ended at Philadelphia International. Data collected will help FAA “identify gaps, improve procedures, and support the safe integration of advanced air mobility into the National Airspace System.”

### 5. White House Imposes Tariffs On Drones And Components.

President Trump issued a proclamation on August 13, 2026 imposing *ad valorem* tariffs on foreign drones and drone components. Tariff rates range from

10% to 100%. The top rate of 100% applies to certain drones that are particularly sensitive for national security purposes as well as their docking stations and components. These drones include those with a maximum takeoff weight of more than 25 kilograms and those with thermal imaging capabilities. The tariffs will take effect on September 3, 2026, with a later effective date of February 9, 2027 for less sensitive items.

**6. DC Circuit Remands DJI Designation As Chinese Military Company.**

The DC Circuit Court on August 14 affirmed in part and reversed in part a decision of the US District Court for DC granting summary judgment against DJI, a major Chinese drone manufacturer. DJI had brought the suit to challenge the Department of War including it on a list designating it as a “Chinese military company”. The DC Circuit sent the case back down to review DOW’s redacted rationale for determining DJI contributed to the “Chinese defense industrial base.”

**7. Sec. Duffy Announces Phase 2 Of BEYOND Program.**

DOT Secretary Sean Duffy announced on August 27 a competitive selection process for Phase 2 of the BEYOND program. BEYOND Phase 2 builds on the Unmanned Aircraft Systems Integration Pilot Program, launched in 2017, and BEYOND Phase 1, which began in 2020. This phase “will expand participation and support more advanced drone operations. New lead participants will help the FAA address the remaining challenges to safely scale routine drone operations in the National Airspace System.”



## **V. ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT**

### **1. Fuel Bill For Global Airline Industry.**

The global average jet fuel price for week ending August 14 was \$158.91 per barrel, up +9.6% from prior month's average, and up +76.5% on prior year's average, according to the Jet Fuel Price Monitor, a joint IATA-Platts initiative.

### **2. UK Leads North Atlantic Contrail-Avoidance Trial.**

Operation Blue Skies, a project led by Google UK and supported by the UK government, will explore how weather intelligence can identify atmospheric conditions associated with persistent aircraft contrails, which can add to climate change. In trials during the winters of 2026/27 and 2027/28, in Shanwick Oceanic airspace over the eastern North Atlantic, the program will test whether small changes in an aircraft's altitude can help avoid atmospheric conditions favoring development of persistent warming contrails. Google says its AI-powered forecasts have helped flight crews and air traffic controllers make targeted adjustments that avoid contrail-sensitive regions while remaining within normal flight operations. With Operation Blue Skies, "we're expanding beyond individual airline trials to coordinated contrail mitigation across an entire flight corridor . . . the world's first state-backed trial to avoid contrails at the scale of an entire oceanic airspace." The project is supported by aviation, academia and atmospheric science organizations.

### **3. Nova Pangaea Project Converts Waste Biomass To SAF.**

Nova Pangaea is collaborating with British Airways and LanzaJet on Project Speedbird to produce bioethanol from local wastes for upgrading to sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) via LanzaJet's Alcohol-to-Jet biorefinery. "The SAF industry is currently at a critical point," said CEO Stewart Stewart. "Demand is increasing and supply chain shocks such as in the Middle East show the need to find an alternative to fossil fuels, yet aviation is currently reliant on SAF from a single feedstock, which will not be enough to meet growing SAF demand." Nova Pangaea's REFNOVA process converts waste biomass and residues, such as wood chips or sawdust, into ethanol, which can make SAF, and it produces "a valuable co-product, biochar, which permanently captures carbon and makes the whole process carbon negative – removing more CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere than it releases."

## **VI. U.S. CONGRESS**

### **1. Bills To Avert Gov't Shutdown In Limbo.**

The House and Senate passed separate continuing resolutions to keep the federal government funded beyond the September 30 close of current stopgap funding. However, they did not reconcile the measures before leaving for the August recess. The House returns August 31; the Senate September 14.

### **2. Senate Democrats Question DHS Purchase Of 12 Aircraft.**

In a letter to Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Markwayne Mullin, Senate Democrats Patty Murray, Appropriations Committee Vice Chair, and Chris Murphy, Homeland Security Subcommittee Ranking Member, criticized DHS's acquisition of 12 new planes, "effectively running an in-house private jet service for Trump administration officials . . . even though no authorization was ever provided by Congress." The Senators noted that DHS spent nearly \$200 million on two Gulfstream 700 luxury business jets alone, and requested an investigation by the DHS Inspector General.

## **VII. BILATERAL AND STATE DEPARTMENT NEWS**

### **1. Syria No Longer Designated State Sponsor Of Terrorism.**

The U.S. State Department announced the formal rescission of Syria's designation as a State Sponsor of Terrorism, and the delisting of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham's designation as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist. Sanctions on Syrian-owned or -controlled air transportation to or from the United States were waived, and certain U.S.-origin items related to civil aviation no longer require an export license. . . . In an interview with the Syrian Arab News Agency, Omar Hosari, head of the General Authority of Civil Aviation and Air Transport, said Syria is gradually rebuilding air connectivity, "pursuing two parallel tracks: expanding Syrian Air's international network and attracting foreign airlines to resume or initiate flights to Syrian airports."

### **2. Visa Bond Program Finalized.**

The State Department finalized a rule that establishes a permanent Visa Bond Pilot Program "to ensure that the alien maintains his or her nonimmigrant status and departs as required." Under the Program, visa bonds may be required from certain business/pleasure (B-1/B-2) applicants who "are nationals of countries with high overstay rates, deficient information sharing, insufficient identity verification and criminal records, and that need improvement in the area of screening and vetting and the security of travel and civil documents, including in the granting of citizenship." Consular officers may require covered nonimmigrant visa applicants to post a bond of up to \$20,000 as a condition of visa issuance, as determined by the consular officers.

## **VIII. EUROPE AND AFRICA**

### **1. Delta To Offer Austin's First Service To Paris.**

Delta will launch Austin's first nonstop service to Paris-Charles de Gaulle, on March 27, becoming the only U.S. airline to offer nonstops from Austin to Europe. Beyond the daily Airbus A330-900 summer-season nonstops, customers have one-stop access to 70 destinations across Europe, India and Africa through the Delta/Air France-KLM joint venture partnership. Through Delta's joint venture partnership with Air France-KLM and Virgin Atlantic, Austin customers can connect beyond Europe.

### **2. Alaska Adds Nonstops To Athens, Paris.**

Alaska Airlines will begin Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner seasonal nonstops from Seattle to Athens, three times weekly, on May 12, the longest route the airline has flown, and five times weekly to Paris, on May 25. Alaska now flies nonstop to Iceland, London, Rome, Seoul and Tokyo, and plans to add at least five more intercontinental destinations by 2030.

### **3. Apollo To Acquire EasyJet.**

Castlelake withdrew its bid for easyJet and the UK budget airline accepted a \$7.7 billion offer from U.S. investment firm Apollo Global Management. To address ownership and control requirements, Apollo's interest will be capped at 49.9%, with UK and European investors holding remaining shares. EasyJet founder Sir Stelios Haji-loannou supports the Apollo proposal. The transaction is expected to close by end of first quarter 2027. Headquarters will remain in Luton. Per its website, easyJet is one of the largest airlines in the world, with 355 aircraft, operating 1,207 routes across 38 countries and 164 airports.

### **4. South African Acting Group CEO Placed On "Special Leave."**

The Board of South African Airways (SAA) placed Acting Group CEO Matshela Seshibe on special leave, "pending the outcome of an internal process"; his four-month tenure followed the resignation of John Lamola. Chief Legal Officer Koekie Mbeki was named Acting Group CEO; she has been with SAA for ten years. Seshibe previously led SAA subsidiary Air Chefs, which has had "enhanced monitoring measures" in place since Listeria was detected in a food product in March; there were no reported or confirmed cases of listeriosis linked to food produced, prepared, or supplied by Air Chefs. . . . In other news, SAA and Emirates announced an expansion of their codeshare partnership, enabling access to nine cities and establishing the start of a reciprocal codeshare agreement. A codeshare agreement signed in December 2025 by SAA and

Turkish Airlines has taken effect, with the Turkish flight code on SAA-operated services between Johannesburg and Cape Town, Durban, Port Elizabeth, Windhoek, Harare, Victoria Falls and Mauritius; and the SA flight code on Turkish Airlines-operated services between Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban and Istanbul, Paris, London and Frankfurt.

5. **Aman Wole Gurmu Named CEO Of Zambia Airways.**

Aman Wole Gurmu was named CEO of Zambia Airways, effective August 1. He previously held senior positions with Ethiopian Airlines Group.

6. **African States Urged To Align API, PNR Programs With ICAO Standards.**

African Airlines Association (AFRAA), Airlines Association of Southern Africa (AASA), and International Air Transport Association (IATA) urged African governments to implement Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) systems in accordance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards and global best practices, and not to fund these programs through charges imposed on airlines or passengers, as border security is a government responsibility. They advised states to collect only data necessary for the intended purpose, retain data for a defined period, guard against discrimination, and use collected information only for legitimate reasons such as border control, security, law enforcement, and prevention of serious crimes. . . . In other news, AFRAA issued a policy paper on blocked funds, “the phenomenon where airlines are unable to repatriate the revenues generated from ticket sales, cargo services, and other commercial activities, resulting in such funds remaining trapped in the country of sale, often for prolonged periods.” Per IATA, as of end of October 2025, ten countries accounted for 89% of the global total of blocked airline funds. Of these, seven are in Africa: Algeria (\$307 million), XAF Zone (\$179 million), Mozambique (\$91 million), Angola (\$81 million), Eritrea (\$78 million), Zimbabwe (\$67 million), and Ethiopia (\$54 million). (XAF countries are Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon.)

7. **United Adds Ten International Cities For 2027.**

See Section X, item 1.

8. **American To Offer Seven New International Routes In 2027.**

See Section X, item 2.

## **IX. ASIA/PACIFIC AND MIDDLE EAST**

### **1. Delta To Launch Seattle–Tokyo Narita, Atlanta-Riyadh Services.**

Delta will launch daily Airbus A330-900neo nonstop service between Seattle and Tokyo Narita in March 2027. Delta also flies to Tokyo Haneda from Seattle. . . . Delta begins nonstops between Atlanta and Riyadh in October, its first direct connection to Saudi Arabia and first nonstops between the U.S. and Riyadh operated by a U.S. airline. The service will fly daily from Oct. 23–30, then three times weekly on the Airbus A350-900.

### **2. JAL, ANA Coordinate Schedules On Tokyo Haneda-Okayama Route.**

Japan Airlines (JAL) and ANA Group coordinated schedules on the Tokyo Haneda-Okayama route, on recommendations from a government panel, “convened to address the sustainability of Japan's domestic air network and as a new initiative to maintain air networks under a challenging Japanese domestic business environment.” . . . ANA revised part of its FY2026 flight schedule to strengthen its passenger service business through a “dual-brand strategy” of leveraging ANA and low-cost unit Peach; both will increase international routes. ANA will collaborate with Nippon Cargo through second half FY2026.

### **3. Korean Air, Asiana Boards Approve Merger.**

Korean Air's Board and Asiana Airlines' shareholders formally approved the merger of the two airlines. Launch of integrated airline expected December 17, as Korean Air proceeds with Air Operator Certificate (AOC) amendments and international operational permits, and both airlines accelerate operational readiness, focusing on systems integration, joint training, and team engagement. . . . In other news, the Boards of JinAir, Air Busan and Air Seoul approved the merger plan of the budget carriers. After further approvals, they will operate as a single airline under the JinAir name with a planned launch date of March 17, 2027.

### **4. U.S.-Israel Flights Increase.**

Israeli airline Israir received all required regulatory approvals to operate flights to the U.S. from Tel Aviv, with service to New York and Miami to begin in October. Delta will resume daily New York-Tel Aviv flights in September, but Atlanta service remains suspended until December and Boston until further notice. United plans three weekly San Francisco to Tel Aviv flights beginning March 28, in addition to its services from Newark, Chicago and Washington Dulles. American recently postponed a resumption of service to next March. El Al and Arkia fly to the U.S.

**5. Tewolde Gebremariam To Lead Air India.**

Tewolde Gebremariam was named CEO and Managing Director of Air India, succeeding Campbell Wilson. Gebremariam was CEO of Ethiopian Airlines Group until 2022, when he retired due to health issues; he is known for “transforming a regional carrier into Africa’s largest, most profitable, and decorated airline group—growing revenue by more than fourfold and fleet size nearly threefold.” Wilson joined Air India in 2022, after 26 years with Singapore Airlines where he was founding CEO of low-cost subsidiary Scoot. . . . Separately, Air New Zealand appointed Campbell Wilson as a Director, effective September 24.

**6. Oman Air, SalamAir Name New CEOs.**

Oman replaced CEO Con Korfiatis with Nasser Al Sharji, who has 25 years of executive leadership, with expertise across key sectors including aviation. . . . Yaqoob bin Saif bin Hamoud Al Kiyumi was named CEO of SalamAir, effective October 1, succeeding Adrian Hamilton-Manns. SalamAir, Oman's low-cost airline, operates 18 Airbus A320neo Family aircraft, serving 40 destinations across the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Europe, with 90 daily flights.

**7. China's C919 Completes First Int'l Commercial Flight.**

The C919, produced by state-owned Commercial Aircraft Corporation of China (COMAC), completed its first international flight, operated by Air China from Beijing Capital to Chinggis Khaan International in Mongolia. Air China currently operates 12 C919s. The narrow-body jet is also operated by China Eastern and China Southern. COMAC has set an annual production target of 200 aircraft by 2029.

**8. Syria No Longer Designated State Sponsor Of Terrorism.**

See Section VII, item 1.

**9. United Adds Ten International Cities For 2027.**

See Section X, item 1.

**10. American To Offer Seven New International Routes In 2027.**

See Section X, item 2.

## **X. AMERICAS**

### **1. United Adds Ten International Cities For 2027.**

United announced its largest ever international expansion, with ten new cities and three new routes across Europe and Asia. Routes included are Los Angeles to Osaka, Washington Dulles to Milan, and Denver to Paris. Newark to Ibiza, Luxembourg, Marseille, Toulouse and Valencia will be flown on United's 'Born to Explore' Airbus A321XLR.

### **2. American To Offer Seven New International Routes In 2027.**

American Airlines will offer seven new international routes in 2027. Charlotte to Barcelona Boeing 777-200ER service begins May 27. Chicago to Tokyo Narita begins March 19 (Boeing 787-9), with connect beyond to destinations in East and Southeast Asia in partnership with Japan Airlines. Philadelphia to Porto, Portugal begins March 28 (A321XLR); Reykjavik, May 27 (A321neo); and Vienna, May 6 (A321XLR). New York Kennedy to Amsterdam begins March 28 and Nice, May 6 (both on A321XLR); and a fourth daily flight to London Heathrow starts March 28 (B787-9), in partnership with British Airways. . . . American plans to expand premium seating to 40% of capacity on narrowbody aircraft, compared to the current 25%, and will restore seat-back screens across the narrowbody fleet on retrofitted and new aircraft starting in 2028. . . . CEO Robert Isom announced a reorganization in an internal memo, affecting several senior executives. Among changes, former Spirit Airlines COO John Bendoraitis will lead technical operations.

### **3. CADE Approves American's \$100 Million Investment In Azul.**

Brazil's Administrative Council for Economic Defense (CADE) approved without restrictions American Airlines' planned \$100 million investment in Azul, finding no competition concerns in the Brazilian aviation market. American will acquire an 8.66% equity stake in Azul and may appoint one member to Azul's Board and one representative to a strategic committee. Expanded commercial cooperation will include codeshare services, reciprocal frequent flyer benefits and shared airport lounges. CADE dismissed objections raised by Abra Group, parent company of Gol and Avianca.

### **4. JetBlue Aligns Three Divisions Under Jeffrey Winter.**

JetBlue promoted Jeffrey Winter to Senior Vice President, Flight Operations, Inflight Experience and Technical Operations, as part of a new structure designed "to strengthen coordination across key operational functions, create clearer accountability, improve day-to-day execution and support the company's



JetForward strategy.” Winter joined the airline in 2015 and has held senior leadership roles across Flight Operations and JetBlue University following a 26-year career in the U.S. Navy. He will continue to report to JetBlue COO Warren Christie.

**5. Allegiant Air Pilots Ratify Two-Year Agreement.**

Allegiant Pilots Association ratified a new collective bargaining agreement, which provides an immediate average hourly wage increase of 40% and payment of \$300 million in accrued retention bonuses, said the Teamsters. Other provisions include a company-funded 15% direct 401(k) contribution; long-term disability through age 65; a five-hour minimum pay credit for each flight duty period; expanded leave protections; and increased premium pay for open time, voluntary flying, and junior assignments. The agreement also includes scheduling-system protections, minimum days-off guarantees, displacement and fleet-transition protections, and furlough protections tied to scheduling efficiencies. . . . Allegiant First will be phased in on select aircraft starting in 2027, providing priority access to check-in and boarding. The eight seats, configured two-by-two at front of aircraft, will have a five-inch recline and 37-inch pitch. The new product will complement, not replace, Allegiant Extra. In August, the carrier began offering complimentary beverage service on all flights.

**6. Laid-Off Spirit Workers in Florida Receive Gov’t. Assistance.**

The U.S. Department of Labor awarded \$5.6 million to the Florida Department of Commerce to support employment and training services for eligible individuals in communities affected by the May closure of Spirit Airlines. The National Dislocated Worker Grant covers Broward, Miami-Dade and Orange counties.

**7. Gol Names New CEO, President.**

Gol CEO Celso Ferrer is leaving the airline to become President of Boeing Latin America and the Caribbean. He will be replaced at the Abra subsidiary by André Fehlauer. Gol COO Albert Perez will take on additional responsibilities as President; he joined Gol in 2024, following leadership roles at Avianca, JetSMART and Vueling.

**8. Appeals Court Allows Delta-Aeromexico Joint Venture.**

See Section I, item 2.

**9. Delta To Offer Austin’s First Service To Paris.**

See Section VIII, item 1.

10. **Alaska Adds Nonstops To Athens, Paris.**  
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11. **Apollo To Acquire EasyJet.**  
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