



## *AVL CELEBRATES FOURTH CONSECUTIVE RECORD YEAR Highest number of passengers ever served in 2017*

Asheville, N.C. - The numbers are in, and Asheville Regional Airport (AVL) annual passenger numbers were at their highest ever in 2017. Specifically, 956,634 passengers used the airport in 2017, compared to 826,648 in 2016, which is a 15.7% increase. 2017 was the fourth consecutive record year of passenger utilization, and the annual numbers are more than 50% higher than they were just five years ago.

"The airport has been growing during the past few years, and 2017 was especially significant," said Lew Bleiweis, A.A.E., Executive Director. "The airlines expanded their services with larger planes and more seats and frequencies to existing destinations, and a new airline and route was also added. Equally important, our region's travelers continued to use their local airport."

"On behalf of the Greater Asheville Regional Airport Authority Board, I would like to thank western North Carolina travelers for flying from their local airport," said Bob Roberts, Greater Asheville Regional Airport Authority Board Chair. "When travelers make the decision to use their local airport, they contribute to the overall strength and vitality of the region at large. Much of the credit for the continued growth at AVL goes to our local communities, and we thank you."

Additionally, western North Carolina's recognition and significant success as a prime tourist destination has been key to the airport's utilization and air service growth.

### **Managing growth**

The airport is working diligently to manage growth. On the horizon are plans to expand the Transportation Security Administration screening area from two lanes to three. The airport is also in discussion with the TSA regarding implementation of TSA Pre-check.

Additionally, a new five-story parking garage is now open, which provides ample close-to-the-terminal, convenient covered parking for travelers.

Last, the airport is beginning an extensive terminal assessment study to determine infrastructure and spatial needs to serve growing numbers of people now and into the future. Once the study is complete, next steps will be identified.

### Highlights: Airline Statistics

Allegiant Air	20% more seats in the market compared to 2016, including new flight to Newark, NJ
American Airlines	10% more seats in the market compared to 2016
Delta Airlines	1% growth in load factor compared to 2016
Elite Airways	New airline in 2017 serving Vero Beach, FL
United Airlines	87% increase in seats in the market compared to 2016, primarily driven by Newark year-round, daily service (increased from a seasonal route) and increases in frequency of flights to and from Chicago

A promotional banner for the 'Wings for Autism' event. On the left is a logo featuring a colorful airplane made of puzzle pieces, with the text 'wings for autism' and 'AVL' below it. The center text reads 'WEDNESDAY February 13 5:00pm Check-in' and 'REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED'. Below that, it says 'For more information visit: flyavl.com/wings'. On the right is a photograph of a woman holding a young child, standing next to a sign that matches the event logo. Logos for Asheville Regional Airport, Allegiant Air, and The Arc of Buncombe County are visible at the bottom right of the banner.

## WINGS FOR AUTISM IS FEBRUARY 13

*Register for this free event*

On February 13, the third annual Wings for Autism® event will be held at Asheville Regional Airport (AVL), and registration is now open. This special event is hosted by **The Arc of Buncombe County**, AVL and **Allegiant Air**, and is also supported by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), and **Bojangles**.

Wings for Autism® is an airport "rehearsal" specially designed for individuals with autism spectrum disorders, their families and aviation professionals. The program provides families with the opportunity to practice entering the airport, obtain boarding passes, go through security, and board a plane - it is especially helpful for those who are concerned about their loved one's ability to handle an airport environment.

Wings for Autism® also gives airport, airline, TSA professionals and other personnel the opportunity to observe, interact and deliver their services in a structured, learning

environment.

**This is a free event**, but registration is required for all participants and slots are limited. Individuals on the autism spectrum must have one caregiver accompany them to the event. The event will be held on Tuesday, February 13, with check-in at 5pm, and boarding beginning at 6:30pm. Allegiant Air is the sponsoring airline, and new this year, Bojangles has partnered to provide boxed meals for all participants.

To learn more or to register for this event, visit [flyavl.com](http://flyavl.com).

Thank you, sponsors!



## ELITE AIRWAYS NONSTOP SERVICE TO VERO BEACH, FLORIDA RESUMES APRIL 5

*Tickets on sale now*

Elite Airways announced that its popular nonstop service to Vero Beach from Asheville Regional Airport will resume April 5. The flight will operate on Thursdays and Sundays, with fares starting at \$179 each way.

For Elite Airways flights, the first checked bag and carry-on are free.

**FIND OUT MORE + BOOK A TRIP >**

### About Elite Airways LLC

Elite Airways LLC was founded in 2006 by airline veterans with the goal to provide passengers a better travel experience with nonstop flights, competitive prices and exceptional service. All scheduled flights are sold and operated by Elite Airways LLC, and available for purchase at [www.eliteairways.com](http://www.eliteairways.com) or by calling 877-393-2510.



## WNC MAGAZINE & AVL PHOTO CONTEST EXHIBIT

*On display through February 21, 2018*

Be sure to stop in the art gallery at AVL during your next visit. You will be greeted by beautiful images from around western North Carolina, captured by talented amateur and professional photographers from our region.

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