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## **NEW INTERNATIONAL ARRIVALS BUILDING OPENS AT HOUSTON'S BUSH INTERCONTINENTAL AIRPORT**

HOUSTON (January 15, 2005) – Houston Mayor Bill White unveiled the new International Arrivals Building (IAB) at George Bush Intercontinental Airport this morning, hailing the new facility that will streamline the customs, immigration and baggage process for international visitors coming to Houston.

“More than 6 million international passengers went through Bush Intercontinental in 2004, and that number is only going to grow,” White said. “Now when those growing numbers of global travelers come in, we have one of the world’s finest places to receive them. And it’s spacious enough to accommodate Houston’s international visitors for years to come.”

“With this wonderful facility to welcome the world business traveler, better and faster service is inevitable,” said Rick Vacar, director of the Houston Airport System (HAS). “When visitors are expedited through Federal Inspection Services (FIS), they will be more likely to want to come back to Houston and do business, come back for fun and leisure, or all of the above.”

Bush Intercontinental Airport (IAH) is taking vital steps to accommodate more visitors from around the world. The opening of the new IAB is the biggest step, because the structure will more than double IAH’s capacity to welcome international visitors.

“We processed about 2,000 passengers an hour in the former FIS facility in the Mickey Leland Building, or Terminal D. In this new facility we’ll be able to do about 4,500 an hour and process 190 bags of luggage per minute,” Vacar said. “The Customs & Border Protection (CBP) inspectors will have 84 booths to use, instead of only 32 at the old Customs facility.”

“The completion of this new federal inspection facility will result in a first-class welcome to Houston and the United States for international travelers,” said Gerard J. “Jordy” Tollett, president and CEO of the Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau. “Combined with the recent completion of our new METRO light rail, the completion of the Galleria expansion, our time-honored cultural arts and the millions we’ve spent on hotel, convention and entertainment facilities, Houston is set to effectively compete for the international tourist with other major U.S. destinations.”

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“The new IAB means a more user-friendly travel experience,” said Jim C. Kollaer, president and CEO of the Greater Houston Partnership. “International business travelers to Houston will find an expedited customs and immigration process, which means they can get to their destinations and business meetings faster. The new facility truly shows Houston as an international city and reflects the region’s commitment to global business and industry.”

Houston’s District B City Council representative Carol Mims Galloway and U.S. Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee joined White and Vacar in cutting the ribbon for the IAB, which will begin operating Jan. 25.

The IAB has 784,000 square feet of floor space over three levels. The basement-level baggage-handling and baggage re-check tunnels; the first level, which includes baggage claim and re-check and the meeter-greeter lobby; and the second floor, which will house the CBP primary inspection hall where arriving passengers are processed. Also located on the second level are the in-transit lounge, a Continental Airlines ticket lobby, and the secured bridge connections to Terminals D and E.

The four bridges are expertly configured for ease of use but also offer airtight security, enabling passengers to walk to and from Terminals D and E and to the federal inspection area.

To construct the IAB, HAS used 30,000 cubic yards of concrete, about 15 million lbs. of steel, more than 380,000 square feet of terrazzo flooring, about 6.5 miles of terrazzo divider strips, 260 miles of electrical wire, and 1 million linear feet of data cable.

The IAB project, which cost \$440 million, and the entire International Services Expansion Program (ISEP), which also included Terminal E, was managed by Parsons Brinckerhoff – the PB Team, and PGAL provided the architectural design.

“The PB Team design phase responsibilities encompassed all the architectural and engineering design, estimating and scheduling, constructability reviews and construction packaging,” said Vince Lepardo, ISEP manager. “During construction, the PB Team was responsible for construction management, contract administration, project controls, construction inspection and surveying.”

Since opening in 1969, Bush Intercontinental has served an ever-increasing amount of world travelers. In 1989 – the last full year before the Leland Building opened – Houston had 1.9 million international passengers. In 1990, with the Leland facility opening in May of that year, international traffic for the year was just over 2 million.

The ever-rising tide of world travelers at Bush Intercontinental exceeded 6 million in 2004. IAH’s international passenger volume now exceeds the numbers that came through before Sept. 11, 2001, and the IAB is large enough to sustain continued growth in the coming years and decades.

According to the Airports Council International’s latest rankings, Bush Intercontinental is ranked seventh among U.S international gateways and is 14th worldwide for total passengers.

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*The Houston Airport System served more than 44 million travelers in 2004. It is the 4th largest multi-airport system in the nation, the 6th largest in the world and the 7th-largest international passenger gateway in the U.S. For more information, visit [www.houstonairportsystem.org](http://www.houstonairportsystem.org).*