United Airlines consolidating all flight training in Denver

Denver wins coveted consolidated training center operations over Houston and Chicago

United Airlines has selected Denver as their city in which to base all of its flight training center operations. For many years, United has operated a flight training center for pilots at Stapleton. United, and previously Continental, has a flight training center in Houston; United has also conducted flight training operations in Chicago.

When United announced its intention several months ago to consolidate all of its training centers into a single location to increase company integration and operational efficiency, we launched into action. Denver Mayor Michael B. Hancock led this effort and the Denver Office of Economic Development (OED) worked closely to support him. The City worked diligently over many months to compete for the site selection of the expanded training center. Together we submitted a robust proposal, which was a collective and comprehensive effort involving the City, the State, DIA, and other partners.

The training center has contributed greatly to our economy and community for many years. The site currently employs 400, and has served as an important employment and economic cornerstone of the redevelopment at Stapleton. Between its DIA operations and the flight training center, United is one of the largest private employers in the city. United is an important partner to Denver, and contributes greatly to the richness of our community through philanthropic support, sponsorships, volunteer activities, and civic leadership.

The expanded center at Stapleton will have a profound impact on our economy. It is estimated to bring 250 additional high-paying jobs. United will make a significant investment, estimated at $40 million, to rehabilitate and update the buildings as well as increase the effectiveness of the facility. All of United’s 12,000 pilots will visit the center to complete training. A total of 69,000 business travel nights are estimated to result from these training visits—thus serving as an important business visitor anchor in Stapleton and throughout Denver.

United said it was the best choice to build the new facility in Denver versus renovating the facility in Houston because it would be more cost effective, it would speed up the opening of the facility and would not affect operation of the airline. "We will extensively renovate the existing Denver facility to house a premier center that will support our training needs now and into the future," United Senior Vice President of Flight Operations Howard Attarian said in a letter to employees.

The expansion will bring additional flight training simulators Denver, which increases their training capacity as well as provides a significant fiscal benefit to the city through increased business personal property tax revenues. The expanded United center will catapult development of the nearby Central Park Station transit-oriented development, activating a key location along Denver’s “Corridor of Opportunity” from its urban core to DIA.

Denver offered incentives to United to recognize this increase in employment and their capital investment in Denver. This is a major win for Denver that will pay dividends for our economy for literally decades to come.

About OED
The Denver Office of Economic Development (OED) is dedicated to advancing economic prosperity for the City of Denver, its businesses, neighborhoods and residents. Working with a wide variety of community partners, OED operates to create a local environment that stimulates balanced growth through job creation, business assistance, housing options, neighborhood redevelopment and the development of a skilled workforce. Learn more at www.denvergov.org/oed.

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