



Appleton International Airport shows increase in business travel

Airlines announce increased routes to major hubs

(Appleton, Wis.) Feb. 24, 2026 Appleton International Airport (ATW) today announced business air travel is up in 2026 due to more routes and more frequent flight options to major U.S. hubs. Business travel in 2026 is forecast to surpass 2025 spending levels. According to the Global Business Travel Association, 84% of business travel buyer expect their organization's travel spending to increase in 2026 an average of 12% over 2025.

Appleton airport executives say all major carriers are projecting double digit growth for the first half of 2026. In the first quarter of 2026, **airlines serving ATW project a 17.5% increase** in seats; in the second quarter of **2026 forecasts show a 24% growth in seats** at ATW.

"More executives, sales teams, and technical staff choose to fly in and out of Appleton because it's convenient, reliable, and efficient," said Airport Director Abe Weber. "Plus, our major carriers have all increased service to major hub airports—as an example by this summer we will have 13 daily flights to O'Hare Airport."

Weber outlined several flight expansions that will connect business travelers to major markets with nonstop flights:

- Starting in February 2026, American Airlines will have four flights daily to Chicago O'Hare (ORD)
- Starting in April 2026, United Airlines will offer nine daily flights to Chicago O'Hare (ORD)
- Also in March, American Airlines will offer two daily nonstop flights to Charlotte/CLT, and in May two daily nonstop flights to Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW)
- Delta Airlines currently offers 3 daily nonstop flight(s) to Detroit (DTW), this will increase to 4 daily nonstop flights by June of 2026
- Delta Airlines increasing seats on their nonstop flight to Atlanta (ATL)
- Allegiant Airlines offers 2 weekly nonstop flight(s) to New York/Newark (EWR)

"Regional businesses are prioritizing high value, in person meetings over routine travel," Weber said. "A hand shake still matters in our technology driven world." Weber further cites the strong manufacturing economy in Northeast Wisconsin as a reason for the growth in business travel. According to the [Northeast Wisconsin Manufacturing Alliance](#) (NEWMA), 68% of manufacturers predict increased sales in 2026.

Weber adds that direct flights are more convenient and faster for business travelers.

"If you're traveling for business, you want fast service without hassles," he said. "That's why we designed the travel experience at ATW with express parking, express bag check, and express food and beverage options. On average, business travelers can get from our front door to the gate in as little as 15 minutes with TSA Pre-Check."

In addition, airline apps have made it easier for business travelers to get real time updates on bookings, flight status, and any anticipated delays.

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About Appleton International Airport

[Appleton International Airport](#) connects our community to the world through American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, United Airlines, Sun Country Airlines, and Allegiant Air. In addition to offering nonstop service to 23 destinations, Appleton Airport connects to 13 major international airport hubs from which travelers can fly to almost anywhere in the world. Using Appleton Airport, travelers can safely and more conveniently get to their destination and home again, leaving them more time for what really matters. Appleton International Airport is the third largest airport in Wisconsin according to arrivals and departureBusiness Travels. Visit atwairport.com to learn more.