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For Immediate Release

Louisville Muhammad Ali International Airport Welcomes the World to Louisville for Kentucky Derby

Louisville, KY (May 2, 2019) – With all eyes on the city for the upcoming Kentucky Oaks and Kentucky Derby, the Louisville Muhammad Ali International Airport (SDF) kicked-off its welcome activities for arriving passengers. From Wednesday, May 1 through Friday, May 3, visitors will notice a variety of hospitality efforts to give them the red rose welcome.

“This really is a time for Louisville and our airport to shine bright,” said Dan Mann, Executive Director of the Louisville Regional Airport Authority. “The airport is the community’s front door – where folks get their first glimpse or taste of our city and what we’re about. Not only at Derby, but year-round we are committed to giving travelers a first-class experience. I think you’ll see, especially at this time of year, we’ve done that.”

To greet the nearly 28,500 arriving travelers, festive, live music is performed by more than 90 musicians from morning until midnight. The talent of these performers, who are part of the Louisville Federation of Musicians (Local 11-637), immediately set the tone for their time in the city. So much so that passengers have been known to drop their luggage and turn the area into an instant dance floor.

In addition to the live music, the rotunda area where Concourses A and B meet, is a hub of active and the perfect Selfie Stop. A nearly-life-sized horse, decorated with a Garland of Roses sits in the airport’s very own Winner’s Circle, complete with Twin Spires. Plus, a living wall of more than 700 sprigs of fresh mint is in place to celebrate Mint Julep Month.

“This year’s schedules for our airline partners show that we’re up in the number of air travelers to expect for Derby,” said Mann. “Compared to 2018, overall this year we’re looking at a 22% capacity increase. The arrivals schedule for Friday, May 3 alone shows 34% more scheduled seats. Total operations also include 71 mainline aircraft – this is 58% more mainline operations than we have on a typical day in May. All this is an incredibly positive response to the airlines use of larger aircraft and additional flights. It speaks highly that folks want to attend the Kentucky Derby, and we here at the airport are glad to be part of that experience.”

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Visitors from around the globe are also welcomed by nearly 60 individual 'Derby Greeters,' who are fashioned in festive attire, complete with a Derby-inspired hat. These Greeters offer a taste of the Commonwealth as they distribute 32,000 complimentary Woodford Reserve® bourbon balls over the three-day period. The Jerry E. Abramson Terminal will also be decorated with more than 4,000 fresh red roses from the gate area to baggage claim.

A mock Garland of Roses is on display outside the *TODAY* store, compliments of The Kroger Company. This display showcases the delicate craftsmanship that will be crowned in the Winner's Circle at Churchill Downs, following this year's Running of the Roses.

'Departure Sunday' or the Sunday immediately following Derby Saturday, is typically the airport's busiest day each year as the majority of visitors depart Louisville. To wish them well on their journey home, soft, soothing live music is performed outside Book & Bourbon Southern Kitchen and The Comfy Cow as folks queue for the TSA security checkpoint and in the rotunda, at the entrance of Concourses A and B.

"On Sunday we're expecting record-setting crowds with nearly 14,500 people departing - likely the busiest day ever in the history of the airport," said Mann. "We encourage anyone departing then to arrive at the airport at least 90 minutes to two hours before their scheduled departure. It will be busy, but our partners at TSA have this down to a science to efficiently get Derby goers screened and onto their gates."

To help ease travelers' worry about their breakables, Derby souvenirs or Kentucky bourbon, complimentary bubble wrap stations are available on each side of the ticketing level. These stations are staffed by volunteers from the Airport Ambassador Program and will be available throughout the day beginning at 4 a.m. that morning.

Follow along with all the Derby action on the airport's [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) accounts.

The Louisville Muhammad Ali International Airport is served by six airlines offering flights to more than 30 nonstop destinations including 19 of the region's top 20 domestic markets. With just one stop, travelers from across the region can reach more than 460 destinations in the U.S. and worldwide.

For additional information regarding Louisville Muhammad Ali International Airport, visit www.FlyLouisville.com.

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