

Lehigh Valley International Airport One of the Best in the U.S.

By Paul Muschick

ALLENTOWN-BETHLEHEM-EASTON - Lehigh Valley International Airport was voted one of the best small airports in the country in Newsweek's Readers' Choice Awards.

The airport, also known as Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton (ABE) airport, finished second in the voting among the 15 nominees. Results were announced May 30.

Here's what Newsweek said about the airport, which has been expanding operations and setting records for both passenger traffic and cargo movement.

"The fourth busiest airport in Pennsylvania, Lehigh Valley International Airport (ABE) gets high marks for its friendly service, easy parking, and clean and relaxing environment. The airport helps foster that vibe with special programs like Music in the Airport, which features live entertainment from local musicians, and C.O.P.E., which brings therapy dogs into the terminal to help soothe travel stress (and the handlers can provide airport info too)."

Lehigh Valley International Airport thanked the employees, volunteers, passengers, airport stakeholders, government leaders, and community partners who supported it during the public online voting.

"It's truly an honor for ABE to receive this national recognition, and we're appreciative of everyone who voted to support their neighborhood airport," said Tom Stoudt, Executive Director of the Lehigh-Northampton Airport Authority, which oversees LVIA. "ABE remains focused on ensuring that passengers enjoy the highest level of service throughout the entire travel experience, and this Newsweek Readers' Choice Award helps to affirm that the efforts of our dedicated staff and stakeholders rank among the best in the country."

The 15 finalist airports were nominated by Newsweek's panel of travel experts.

Last year, 930,946 passengers traveled through Lehigh Valley International Airport, the most since 2004.

In about the past year, the airport has added non-stop flights to Orlando, Denver, and Melbourne, Fla. Last summer, it opened a \$35 million expansion of its passenger terminal, with a new security checkpoint and terminal connector.

The expansion includes a new fourth security screening lane that will allow up to 740 passengers to be screened per hour, up from 300 per hour. The new terminal connector reduces the distance passengers must walk to reach their gate.

Gov. Josh Shapiro and U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg attended the ribbon-cutting for that expansion.

"This expansion should send a clear message that Allentown and the Lehigh Valley are ready to drive innovation and economic opportunity on a national and global scale," Shapiro said.

Lehigh Valley International Airport's fast-growing cargo operation - the second-largest in Pennsylvania - is an asset for the region's growing manufacturing economy and increasing population that desires consumer goods.

In 2023, 275 million pounds of cargo moved through the airport, the fourth year it set a new high. The amount of freight processed has increased by 800% since 2014. Earlier this year, the airport announced it would be building a \$40.8 million expansion of its cargo hub, to accommodate further growth and improve the efficiency of operations.



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