

Concession Revenue With a Bark

Pet facilities trend growing both on- and off-airport

Airport revenue is for the birds, er...that is, airport revenue will be from the birds, dogs, cats and other exotic animals anticipated to board at a pet facility planned at Denver International Airport.

Denver city officials are soliciting proposals for a 24-hour center to be financed and operated by a private company on a four-acre site adjacent to DIA. If plans fall into place, construction will begin in August 2008 with an opening anticipated in February 2009.

AirProjects Principal Ann Ferraguto said that pet care has recently found a welcome and convenient home in the airport environment.

"I think the real incentive for a passenger to use these facilities is that they are open 24/7 and 365 days a year," Ferraguto, a commercial facilities consultant, said. "Oftentimes when you are trying to coordinate boarding a pet with your flight, you might have to bring the pet in a day early or pick it up late due to regular operating hours.

"Airport kenneling is good for the pets and it is good for the people."

Ferraguto noted that pet facilities have cropped up both on- and off-airport property.

Virginia-based Aviation Facilities Company (AFCO) is developing an off-site pet care facility near Chicago Midway Airport to open next spring.

AFCO targets property close to airport economy or remote parking lots for its pet care facilities. By doing so, they develop synergies between airport parking and pet boarding, in essence providing one stop for passengers to be able to drop their pets off and hop a shuttle to the terminal building.



AFCO is partnering with the successful operators of Atlanta-based Airport Park 'N Bark Pet Resort & Doggie Day Care to build a pet center that will accommodate up to 300 animals near Chicago Midway Airport.



A number of airports including Denver International Airport are now soliciting proposals for 24-hour pet centers.

AFCO CEO Frank Chambers said there has been a noticeable absence of adequate pet facilities for a number of different markets around the airport including the pets of employees and flight crews as well as passengers.

"They can use pet boarding that accommodates their schedules, and that is the biggest thing we really offer," Chambers said. "As long as there are flights coming in, we are open.

AFCO, a full-service real estate and management organization, had not ventured into pet boarding or pet care before, but has teamed with various operators of pet facilities to offer this specialized service.

"What we bring to the package is the ability to do these in conjunction with airports," Chambers said, noting that AFCO is willing to team with any good operator to negotiate leaseholds with airports and public authorities.

In Chicago, AFCO is partnering with the successful operators of Atlanta-based Airport Park 'N Bark Pet Resort & Doggie Day Care to build a pet center that will accommodate up to 300 animals. It will offer a full range of service: simple day care to a complete resort environment including window views and lap pools for pet exercise.

"If pet owners are going on vacation, they want their pet to have a vacation, too," Chambers said. "And we can accommodate them."

While Chicago's pet center will be off the airport property, Chambers was quick to mention the same concept can be established as a regular concession in conjunction with airport properties. ■