

# Airlines trade fuel efficiency for quicker, on-time arrivals

DALLAS (AP) — In a travel season rife with late arrivals and canceled flights, several airlines have begun flying at lower altitudes, trading fuel efficiency for on-time arrivals.

The FAA more than a year ago gave airlines approval to operate some short flights — up to 500 miles — at between 8,000 feet and 23,000 feet. But airlines had resisted until recently because flying through denser air at lower altitudes burns more fuel.

But with thousands of flight delays drawing the ire of travelers and the eye of federal regulators, more airlines are turning to this quick fix.

After meeting with airline, union and airport executives Monday, Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater announced the formation of a task force to monitor airline service.

Slater said his department will serve as a clearinghouse to share information, resulting in improved performance. For example, Slater said, airlines have promised to more promptly inform the Federal Aviation Administration when they cancel flights, so air traffic controllers can more efficiently use the available airspace.

Though it costs more in fuel, airline officials say the low-altitude routes allow them to complete more flights on time, cutting the need for relief crews.

Because flight patterns at high-altitude, fuel-saving routes have become congested, Low Altitude Arrival Departure Routes — called "ladder" flights in the industry — are designed to allow planes to "get off the ground instead of waiting in queue," said FAA spokesman Paul Turk.

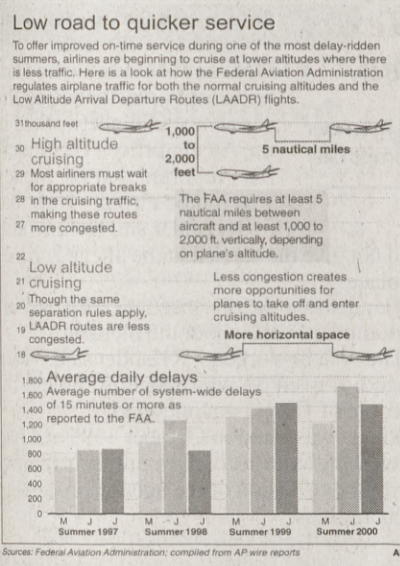
Northwest Airlines, TWA, Delta, Continental and US Airways tested the routes in some cities this spring. At Chicago's busy O'Hare International Airport, United Airlines began rerouting some departing planes to underused, lower-altitude flight paths in June.

And Fort Worth-based American Airlines could begin the low flights this week, pending approval of a memorandum of understanding with the FAA, American Airlines spokesman John Hotard said.

At United, between 30 and 40 LAADR flights take off from O'Hare daily, saving an average of two minutes on the ground and about 10 in the air, spokesman Joe Hopkins said. And the airline is considering adding up to 30 more.

Some 670 million Americans will fly this year, up 20 million from a year ago and an increase that is taxing the system and could not have been foreseen, Slater said.

The Federal Aviation Administration reported more than 44,000 flight delays in July alone, and that was an improvement from June. Delays have been attributed to increased numbers of people traveling, bad weather and — at least for one airline — labor disagreements.



# Jones executed for 1986 slaying

HUNTSVILLE, Texas (AP) — Proclaiming his innocence to the end, convicted killer Richard Wayne Jones was executed Tuesday evening for abducting and fatally stabbing a Tarrant County woman 14 years ago, then burning her body.

Jones acknowledged setting fire to slay Tammy Livingston, 27, of Hurst, but said he wasn't responsible for the 17 stab wounds that killed her.

"I want the victim's family to know I didn't commit this crime," Jones said while strapped to the death chamber gurney.

"I didn't kill your loved one," he said while members of his victims family watched from a window a few feet away.

He criticized prosecutors for convicting an innocent man, adding, "I hope you can live with it."

Then he turned to his own relatives and friends who watched from another window and thanked them for their support and expressed his love. "Y'all stay strong," he said.

Then he turned toward the warden and said "Warden, take me home." He gasped twice, let out a slight grunt and was pronounced dead at 6:19 p.m., seven minutes after the lethal drugs began flowing.

**"I want the victim's family to know I didn't commit this crime. I didn't kill your loved one."**

— Richard Wayne Jones inmate executed for murder

Jones, 40, was the 30th Texas prisoner put to death this year, the fourth this month and first of two this week.

Another convicted murderer, David Gibbs, is set to die Wednesday evening for the rape-slaying of a Conroe woman, one of two women killed in a 1985 attack. The U.S. Supreme Court, which refused to halt the Jones punishment, also rejected appeals this week from Gibbs, clearing the way for his execution.

Jones, with a criminal past that included theft, burglary and robbery convictions and a parole violation that returned him to prison, was on parole for about 4 1/2 months when he was arrested for killing Livingston Feb. 19, 1986.

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