

Reno becoming a significant freight hub

By John Harrell, USA Today

RENO – It's 5:30am at Reno-Tahoe International Airport. A ramp agent shepherds a line of nondescript boxes up a conveyor belt into the belly of a Southwest Airlines Boeing 737 that's scheduled for a 5:55am departure to Las Vegas.

Once that flight arrives to Vegas, those packages could be bound for almost any of the other points on Southwest's route map. Nashville, perhaps, on Southwest Flight 1310. Or maybe Hartford, Conn., after a stop in Tampa along the way on Flight 589.

Wherever the boxes might end up, they began their journey in Reno amid what's being called a "surge" in air-cargo operations here, says Matt Buckley, Southwest's vice president of Cargo and Charters. "Over the past four years, we've tripled our volume" here, he adds.

2015 was a good year for cargo operations at the airport, "the best year for Reno ever" in terms of cargo carriage, says Hasaan Azam, Reno-Tahoe airport's manager of Air Service Development.

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