

Atlantic City visitors declined for eighth straight year in 2013

declined for eighth straight

The number of travelers arriving by casino bus, air and rail declined in 2013. Posner and other analysts have blamed casino competition in other states and the lingering effects of Hurricane Sandy for driving down arrivals at Atlantic City International Airport.

Overall, the airport carried 1.1 million passengers on scheduled flights and charters in 2013, an 18 percent drop compared to nearly 1.4 million passengers in 2012.

Air travel represents the greatest potential for growth in the city's overnight tourist market, Posner said. Atlantic City International is currently served by only one scheduled carrier, Spirit Airlines. However, United Airlines is launching daily flights to Atlantic City from its Chicago and Houston hubs beginning April 1.

"Arrivals via air represent a very different value at Atlantic City than an arrival via the road or other modes of travel," Posner said. "Air arrivals are much more likely to stay longer and spend more money."

Meanwhile, the number of passengers traveling on casino buses fell 18 percent in 2013, to 2.1 million. Casinos have been cutting back on bus passengers in recent years to concentrate their marketing and promotional programs on wealthier customers arriving by car.

Rail passengers were down nearly 5 percent in 2013. NJ Transit's commuter rail line, which links Atlantic City with Philadelphia, carried about 1.25 million passengers last year, compared to 1.3 million in 2012, figures show.

*Contact Donald Wittkowski:*

**609-272-7258**

DWittkowski@pressofac.com