



## JetBlue readies new post 9\11 terminal at JFK

By **Samantha Bomkamp** **The Associated Press**

NEW YORK — As a symbol of the last century of flight sits in its shadow, a new JetBlue terminal at John F. Kennedy International Airport is undergoing a series of tests ahead of its scheduled opening on Oct. 1.

JetBlue Airways Corp. is in the final stretch of a four-year, \$743 million construction project to create a modern terminal and a new home base for the Forest Hills, N.Y.-based carrier. The space is also the first terminal designed and built since 9/11, and aims to address a number of security and planning concerns.

The new terminal features a 20-lane security checkpoint, the largest screening area of any terminal in North America, according to Tom Kennedy, project director, of the design and consulting firm Arup. The terminal also features fully automated bag screening and wide open spaces to maximize efficiency of passenger flow.

The new space is connected to the landmark Trans World Airlines terminal, designed by architect Eero Saarinen, which was built in 1962 and closed when TWA ended operations in October 2001. Connecting the new terminal to the historic site was a unique feat, said William D. Hooper Jr., managing director of architecture firm Gensler.

"It's an icon of 20th century aviation, and it was a piece of the puzzle," Hooper said. "We had to respect it. We didn't want (the new terminal) to have a looming presence."

JetBlue expects the new terminal to handle about 250 flights each day, more than doubling the carrier's current activity at JFK from its home in Terminal 6. That kind of traffic requires a lot of planning.

Later this month, JetBlue will welcome an invited group of more than 1,000 of its frequent fliers, hand them a script, and ask them to participate in a fullscale "dress rehearsal" to test everything from staff readiness to mechanics at the new terminal.

The low-cost carrier will recruit a group of customers for a run-through of terminal operations, from checkin to baggage claim, next Saturday. The practice run, operated by Arup, will offer a chance to fix any last-minute kinks.

Volunteers will enter from various points, including a skywalk connecting from public transit and curbside. The TWA terminal, which will eventually hold some JetBlue check-in kiosks, will not be open for the dress rehearsal or when the lights go on in Terminal 5 on Oct. 1. The historic structure awaits a facelift by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, with the interior expected to be completed in the spring.

Each person playing the role of a flier will be handed a list of details about their simulated flight, including a pseudonym. The individuals will then go through the check-in process, obtain a fake boarding pass, go through security, pass the food court and head on to their gate.

The new JetBlue terminal was designed with an emphasis on openness. The depth of passenger drop off lanes is twice the size of average lanes at other airports. The security screening areas span the space of a football field. There is a lot of talk about "flow" here, suggesting the space should provide a natural path from one space to another.

Attention to fine details and numerous statistics and survey analysis is also put into play. There are twice as many x-ray machines as metal detectors, in an effort to speed up what can be one of the more annoying parts of air travel.

Rubber floors cover the security space. Hooper said rubber was used because it was the most comfortable for shoeless feet treading through security screenings — a compromise between cold tile and carpet. A blue wall nearby will hold a bench where travelers can sit to put their shoes back on and collect themselves before traveling down ramps into the heart of the terminal.

The terminal's "Marketplace" is a wide open space where departing passengers can eat and lounge. Several stores are also scheduled for the space, ranging from clothing retailer Lacoste to a Borders book shop.

A high main ceiling, drenched in natural light, is decorated with a large ring that will carry the JetBlue logo. Hooper said the sculpted piece is intended to create the feel of a city center, as a clock tower would in a town. From there, travelers will head down a wide corridor to the gates.