

Swine flu helps fuel major decline in traffic for U.S. airlines

Monday, June 22, 2009, 3:16pm MDT

U.S. airlines saw passenger traffic drop 9.5 percent in May, with the H1N1 swine flu outbreak a factor, and their revenue dropped another 26 percent compared to April.

The Air Transport Association of America said Monday the poor U.S. economy and H1N1 influenza, which began in Mexico in late April and spread to the U.S. and other countries in May, took a bite out of air travel.

The May drop marks the seventh consecutive month in which airline revenue dropped compared to 2008, according to the ATA.

"In May, the H1N1 influenza outbreak compounded an already weak demand situation, negatively impacting industry cash flow and forcing a closer look at current levels of flying," said ATA President and CEO James May in a statement announcing the traffic and revenue numbers.

<http://www.bizjournals.com/denver/stories/2009/06/22/daily12.html>