

Summer air travel chaotic

by UPI

CHICAGO -- After years of troubled air travel in the United States, the next few months may be the worst yet, with growing congestion leaving more passengers angry.

"It has been a horrendous summer, with flight delays rippling nationwide like never before and fears of having entire airline networks unravel," said Joseph Schwieterman, an aviation expert at DePaul University.

In the first five months of this year, the airline industry's on-time performance was the worst in 13 years, federal officials reported last week.

At O'Hare International Airport, for example, only three of every five flights departed on time during those months, ranking O'Hare last among the busiest U.S. airports.

June was plagued with labor troubles, computer outages and bursts of bad weather that shut down hub after hub, causing passengers to miss flights across the country, the Chicago Tribune reported Saturday.

A record 209 million U.S. passengers are predicted to fly this summer as air traffic controllers struggle with aging technology and an overwhelmed air travel system, the newspaper said.

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