

## Airline to resume Chicago-Tokyo non-stops

By Lorene Yue

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(Crain's) — All Nippon Airways of Japan is returning to Chicago's O'Hare International Airport after a nearly five-year absence.

The Tokyo-based carrier will resume its daily non-stop flight from Chicago to Tokyo on Oct. 29 thanks to renewed demand.

"Chicago is experiencing exciting growth with regards to international travel and we are happy to be there to take part in it," said Takeshi Asao, a senior vice-president with ANA.

ANA stopped flying from Chicago to Tokyo in November 2001 after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks nearly brought business travel to a halt, although the airline continued to operate on a code-share alliance with United Airlines.

That meant passengers booking on ANA flew on a United-operated route and aircraft from Chicago to Tokyo, but ANA officials said they now feel they can operate a profitable daily flight between the two cities.

"Business travelers just plain quit traveling for a while," said Terry Trippler, an airline industry consultant. "It took about 3½ years to get business travel to the level of before Sept. 11. You gotta make a buck on that route or you're not going to fly it."

The Japanese carrier is sharing a departing gate in O'Hare's Terminal 1 with United, a partnership that ANA officials hope will help passengers make connecting flights quicker than if the flight left from the airport's international terminal.

"ANA's membership in the Star Alliance (network) will again be a major benefit to the Chicago region," said a spokeswoman for Chicago's aviation department. "Partners in this global network bring more passengers to O'Hare, taking advantage of United's strong domestic hub network."

The Chicago-to-Tokyo route will be flown on a Boeing 777-300ER.

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