

Food on the Fly

**Delaware North Companies partners with NEXTEP SYSTEMS
in order to bring a modern look to airport concessions.**

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The players

Delaware North Companies Travel Hospitality Services operates 300 foodservice and retail outlets in more than 20 airports around the world, including Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport and Los Angeles International Airport, as well as in four travel plazas on the New York State Thruway. Over the past year, Delaware North has opened several concepts in Detroit's airport, including the first-ever Sports Illustrated store, Hockeytown and Gayle's Chocolates. This summer, Delaware North will open a Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen and two Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf locations for the McNamara Terminal.

NEXTEP SYSTEMS, based in Troy, Mich., is a leading provider of automated-ordering solutions for restaurants, casinos, airports, stadiums, arenas, delicatessens and other high-volume food-service venues. NEXTEP's core business revolves around self-order kiosks, online ordering and digital menu boards.

The problem

Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport is one of the busiest airports in both the United States and the world in terms of passenger traffic. The airport also is one of the top ten U.S. international gateway airports. Detroit Metro Airport also serves the Toledo, Ohio, area as well as Windsor, Ontario, in nearby Canada.

Detroit Metro Airport is the largest hub for Northwest Airlines, and its merger with Delta is expected to turn the airport into a key gateway to Asia. The airport's mile-long McNamara Terminal is the second-longest airport terminal building in the world.

"..in an airport, we have a very narrow window for capturing a customer, and the customer is also usually passing by locations at a rapid pace — whatever you can do to grab their attention as they walk by and assist them in making a decision is beneficial. Digital menu boards are well suited to do that."

**— Matt King, president,
Delaware North Companies
Travel Hospitality Services**

As part of the redesign of Detroit Metro Airport, the Wayne County Airport Authority has mandated that all new foodservice vendors who use menu displays must incorporate a digital menu board system into their operations. All foodservice contracts that are re-awarded for existing concepts will include the same mandate.

The solution

Automated ordering systems provider NEXTEP SYSTEMS partnered with Delaware North to deploy NEXTEP's digital menu board system in a Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen restaurant located in the McNamara Terminal at the Detroit Metro Airport. NEXTEP also is slated to deploy digital menu boards in two Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf locations operated by Delaware North that are scheduled to open in the McNamara Terminal by September 2009. Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf is Delaware North's exclusive preferred coffee partner.

NEXTEP already had an extensive presence in the Detroit Metro Airport. The company provided approximately half of the digital menu boards for the new North Terminal when it opened last year.

The menu boards integrate seamlessly with the restaurant's MICROS 9700 point-of-sale system and feature the menu as well as full-motion video promoting various dishes.

"Delaware North has had a relationship with [NEXTEP] in our other subsidiaries, including the TD Garden sports and entertainment arena in Boston," said Matt King, president of Delaware North Companies Travel Hospitality Services. To learn more, see: [Kiosk Deployment Scores in Boston Arena](#).

"NEXTEP SYSTEMS and Delaware North Companies are both respected leaders in their industries and this partnership enables us to play off of each other's strengths," said King. "We are already seeing more customers at our foodservice locations at Detroit Airport and an increased order size since introducing the menu boards."

The Popeyes deployment features three 42-inch monitors showing the restaurant's menu, a 42-inch monitor mounted portrait-style that features promotional videos and an additional monitor on the lease line of the concourse that rotates through the various menu panels. The menu boards feature animation along with suggestive selling designed to promote the restaurant's more profitable items.

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Digital menu boards at the Popeyes in Detroit's McNamara Terminal helped the franchise stand out in a crowded market.

a rapid pace — whatever you can do to grab their attention as they walk by and assist them in making a decision is beneficial,” King said. “Digital menu boards are well suited to do that.”

The marketplace is seeing the end of traditional, static menu boards for competitive operations such as airport concessions, says NEXTEP president Tommy Woycik.

“Digital menu boards provide restaurant concepts with a distinct competitive advantage in capturing attention and additional sales,” he said. “It has been great to work with thought-leading companies like Delaware North, both in airports and in sporting venues.”

There are additional benefits to the digital menu board system besides its sleek appearance and its ability to serve as a marketing platform, says Daniel House, business information partner with Delaware North’s information technology department.

“What’s nice about the NEXTEP setup is that it interfaces with our MICROS point-of-sale system, so you have real-time updates to the menu board should you need to change a price or drop an item from the menu,” House said. “If you want to run a special of some kind it is pretty simple to put in the pricing and have it appear on the menu board. In a regulated environment such as an airport, it is important to have menu items and prices up to date to keep you contractually sound.”

The results

Two Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf locations featuring digital menu boards from NEXTEP are currently under development in the McNamara Terminal, with one adjacent to the Popeyes location and one in the baggage claim area.

Delaware North hopes to continue working with NEXTEP on additional digital menu board system deployments, King says. In part based upon its experience with NEXTEP’s digital menu board system, the company is evaluating NEXTEP’s self-order kiosks and is considering incorporating them into future foodservice projects.

“NEXTEP brings to the table an expertise in how to deploy these types of systems and how to get your return on investment,” House said. “From a technology standpoint, our experience has been pretty painless; this is not normally the case with a product like this. They are great people to work with.”

About the sponsor: NEXTEP SYSTEMS, based in Troy, Mich., is a leading provider of automated-ordering solutions for restaurants, casinos, airports, stadiums, arenas, delicatessens and other high-volume food-service venues. NEXTEP’s core business revolves around self-order kiosks, online ordering and digital menu boards.



The digital menu boards at Popeyes help promote specials, engage customers and speed up service.