



# New Data for New Purposes

Rolf R. Schmitt  
Bureau of Transportation Statistics

FCSM Session on Leveraging Official Statistics Programs  
to Address Emerging Issues: Providing Information  
Relevant to the Coronavirus Pandemic

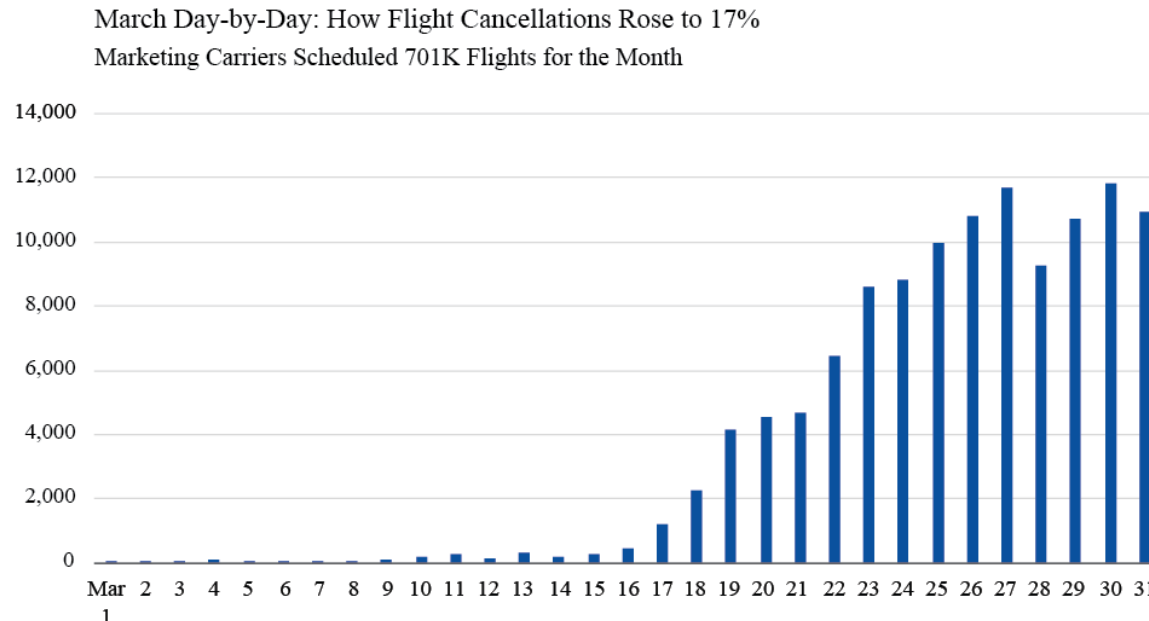
# Pre-Pandemic

---

- Traditional statistical products are annual and monthly
- Vetting is a deliberative process
- Preliminary estimates are based on stable trends
- General wish for more timely products

# The Pandemic arrives

- Anecdotal evidence of immediate effects on transportation system
- Strong hunger by departmental leadership for immediate data to understand magnitude of changes



# The BTS Response

---

- Search for surrogate indicators
- New approaches to preliminary measures
- New sources for traditional measures
- Rapid prototyping
- Numbers now, vetting later
- Daily and weekly products

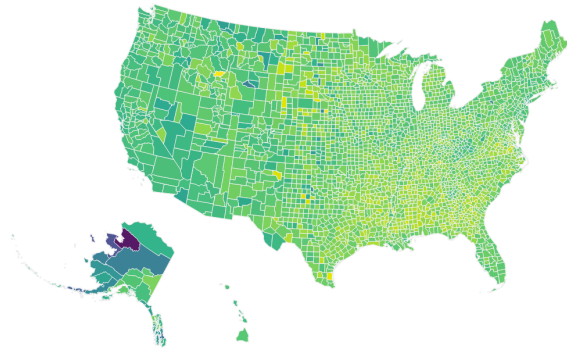
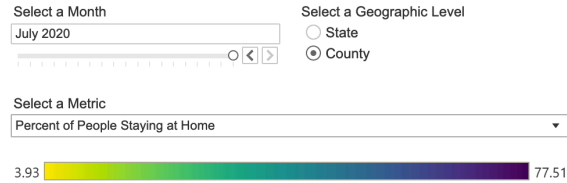
# The BTS Response

---

- The Week in Transportation
- Daily statistics for the Secretary
- Daily travel reported weekly from mobile devices rather than surveys
- County transportation profiles for geographic detail
- Travel on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July – setting a new norm for timeliness

# The BTS Response

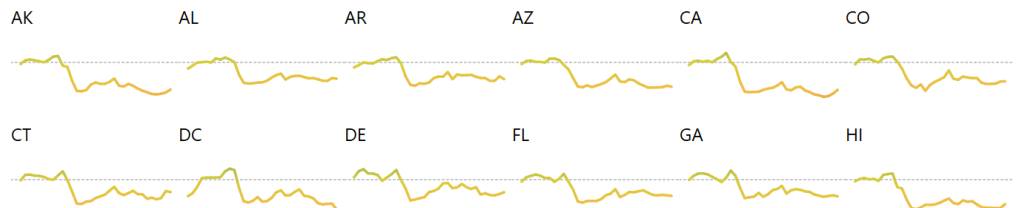
## Average Percent of People Staying at Home per Day



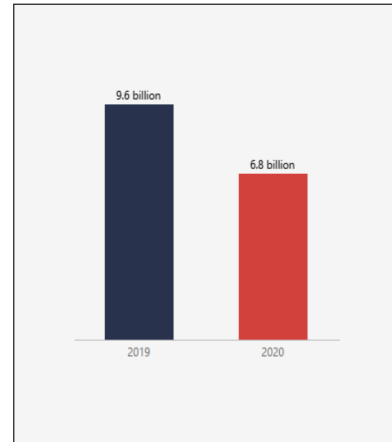
Metric  
Trips

### Trips by State

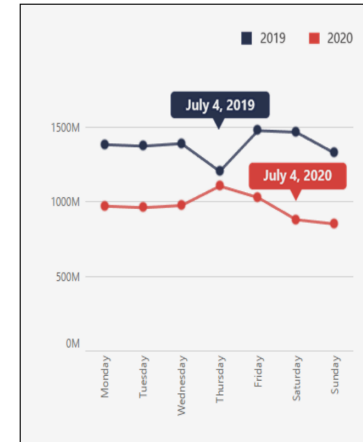
Change compared to 2019



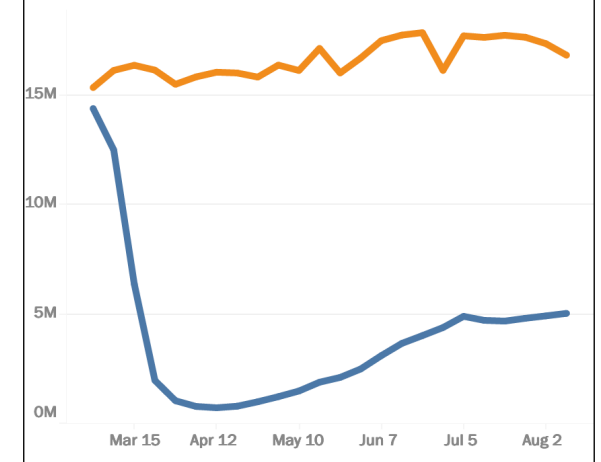
### Total Trips Taken Monday-Sunday During the Week of the 4th of July, 2019 and 2020



### Total Trips Taken Daily Monday-Sunday Week of the 4th of July, 2019 and 2020



## People Screened At All Airports



## International Airline Cargo (Preliminary)

June 2020: 740T Tons



# Making the BTS Response Possible

---

- Previous development of the daily travel data system as exploratory research
- Previous development of the data pipeline
- Contacts with data sources for traditional compilations
- Cross-office team
- Pre-existing arrangements for telework
- Sense of challenge and urgency

# The new normal

---

- Daily statistics reported weekly to capture temporal variation, tabulated at the county level to capture geographic variation
- Explore and vet the new data sources
- Remote operations



# www.bts.gov/covid-19

[Ask-A-Librarian](#) | [A-Z Index](#)

## Bureau of Transportation Statistics

[Topics and Geography](#) | [Statistical Products and Data](#) | [National Transportation Library](#) | [Newsroom](#) | [About BTS](#)

[Home](#)  
[COVID-19 Related Transportation Statistics](#)  
[Daily Travel \(National, State, and County\)](#) >  
[Docked Bikeshare Ridership](#)  
[Ferry Operations](#) >  
[Pandemic-Related Data Spotlights](#) >

### COVID-19 Related Transportation Statistics

Responding to interest in the most recent pandemic-related data, BTS has created web pages of transportation statistics allowing comparison of pre-COVID-19 and current numbers for passenger travel and freight shipments.

These pages present a wide range of data on all transportation modes from various sources, and BTS will add more measures as they become available.

#### DAILY TRAVEL DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- **What it shows:** The percent and number of people staying home and not staying home each day, and the number of trips taken each day for 10 different distance groupings.
- **How recent:** One-week lag
- **Update Frequency:** Weekly on Monday
- **Geography level:** National, State, County

#### MOBILITY OVER TIME BY STATE AND BY TRIP DISTANCE

