Why this flight was the most chronically delayed in the nation

Ted Sherman  For The Star-Ledger

The Embraer RJ145 regional jet used by United Express to fly between South Bend, Ind., and Newark Liberty has a cruising speed of more than 500 miles per hour. From takeoff to approach and landing, the flight to New Jersey — operated by ExpressJet for United — typically takes a little over two hours.

But not always.

A report out this week found the most chronically delayed flight in the country was ExpressJet Flight 4154. In December, the most recent month for which data is available, most of the 13 flights from Indianapolis to New York were more than 30 minutes late or canceled more than 50 percent of the time, according to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics.

Flight 4154 averaged 13 minutes late. The second most chronically delayed flight was also an ExpressJet flight to New- ark, this one from Savannah, Ga. It averaged 13 minutes late, with 12 out of 13 flights not arriving on time in December, according to the report.

Nationwide among all airlines, 248 flights were late or canceled more than 50 percent of the time in December, said the fed- eral agency. Nearly a quarter of them were ExpressJet flights — and a large number of those flights either arrived or took off from Newark, the numbers show.

ExpressJet, which operates as American Eagle, Delta Connection and United Express, blamed its lagged performance into Newark in December on the weather.

"ExpressJet’s rankings on the recent Bureau of Transportation Statistics report can be attributed to inordinate weather in Newark, as well as air traffic control delays," programs implemented by the Newark Liberty International Airport. 

"I can’t view the 100 pictures and read the stories behind them without being struck by the breadth and depth of talent here," Ralph Izzo, PSEG chair- man, president and CEO said in a statement.

The project began more than a year ago after the foundation reached out to community groups and leaders seeking nominations for the 100 people who would represent the city.

In selecting the finalists, Jones said the group made sure Newark’s demo- graphic representation was proportionate — by race, age, gender and role of residence. Jones said they also picked people who embodied some of the city’s most pressing issues.

"These are all change agents," Jones said.

"I found the people really vibrant and determined and absolutely com- mitted to making Newark what they believe it could be."

On a recent day on the ground floor of the Hahne building, people fre- quently stopped to stare at the por-traits. Some looked through a few and moved on, others took the time to stop at each frame and read each person’s story.

"My dream is that we can look at people differently, that we can be less judgmental, that we could read some- thing about someone that we never would have thought that person did that," Jones said. "These are the people that keep the wheels of the city turning."

The photographs along with video interviews are also on display online at 100people.org/newark.