

(June 6, 2006) Rep. Lipinski Announces Grant for Midway Airport Safety Improvements

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Congressman Dan Lipinski announced today that the City of Chicago will receive \$15 million to make runway safety improvements at Midway Airport. The grant, secured through the U.S. Department of Transportation, will be used to install arrestor beds in the runway safety areas to prevent incidents such as the one that occurred last December. That accident, which killed one motorist, involved a Southwest Airlines jet skidding off the runway and crashing through the barrier at 55th Street and Central Avenue. "I applaud the federal government's response to my request for more money to strengthen safety at Midway Airport" said Lipinski. "With aircraft-arresting beds, we can greatly reduce the chances of accidents at Midway without expanding the airport's current boundaries." The aircraft arrestor beds to be installed are referred to as Engineered Material Arresting Systems (EMAS). EMAS consists of a bed of specially coated cement blocks engineered to collapse under the weight of an aircraft's landing gear. These systems have been installed at 14 airports around the country and have averted several incidents of planes overshooting smaller runway safety areas.