

## (May 16, 1007) Midway gets \$15-million grant to finish safety project

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By Paul Merrion

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(Crain's) - Chicago received another \$15-million federal grant to finish runway safety buffer zones at Midway International Airport.

The grant from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) means both ends of the four runways commercial planes can use at Midway will have arrestor beds made of crushable blocks of cement, water and foam. They are designed to stop a Boeing 737 at 80% of its maximum weight.

"I applaud the FAA's response to my request for more money to strengthen safety at Midway Airport," U.S. Rep. Daniel Lipinski, D-Chicago, whose district includes Midway, said in a statement announcing the grant. "With aircraft-arresting beds, we can greatly reduce the chances of accidents at Midway without expanding the airport's current boundaries."

The project stems from a December 2005 accident in which a Southwest Airlines jet, landing in snowy weather, skidded off the end of a runway and crashed through a fence at 55th Street and Central Avenue, killing a 6-year-old boy in a car.

Midway got a \$15-million FAA grant last year to start the project.

The incident highlighted the lack of usual 1,000-foot safety overruns at the end of runways, which the FAA said were not practical given Midway's tight boundaries.