

## (May 16, 2007) Lipinski Announces Runway Safety Grant for Midway Airport

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\$15 Million Grant Will Enhance the Safety of Airline Passengers and Midway Community

[WASHINGTON, DC] Today, Congressman Dan Lipinski announced 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 in December 2005. That accident, which killed a six year-old boy in a passing car, involved a Southwest Airlines jet skidding off the runway and crashing through the barrier at 55th Street and Central Avenue.

Today's grant is in response to a meeting Congressman Lipinski had with Aviation Subcommittee Chairman Jerry Costello (D-IL) and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Administrator Marion Blakey regarding safety improvements at Midway Airport in January.

"I applaud the FAA'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."

Last June, Congressman Lipinski announced that the U.S. Department of Transportation awarded a \$15 million Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grant to the City to cover the first phase of a project to construct Engineered Material Arresting Systems (EMAS) along four runways at Midway. EMAS consists of a bed of specially coated cement blocks engineered to collapse under the weight of an aircraft's landing gear should it overshoot the end of a runway. Today's grant for an additional \$15 million will cover the second phase and completion of the project.

"I will continue to work to protect airplane passengers, as well as those living, working, shopping, and attending school in and around Midway Airport, while not adversely impacting the surrounding community," stated Lipinski.