

(May 30, 2007) Secure Funds For Runways at Midway

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A \$15 million federal grant Chicago needs to complete the installation of arrestor beds at Midway Airport has been approved, Cong. Dan Lipinski (D-3rd) recently announced.

Lipinski, a member of the House Transportation Committee, said in a May 16 statement that the grant secured through the U.S. Department of Transportation will be used to complete the installation of arrestor beds in the runway safety areas to prevent accidents such as the one that occurred in December 2005.

In that accident, a 6-year-old boy in a passing car was killed when a Southwest Airlines jet skidded off a runway during a snowstorm and crashed through the fence onto Central Avenue at 55th Street.

"I applaud the FAA's response to my request for more money to strengthen safety at Midway Airport. With aircraft arrestor beds, we can greatly reduce the chances of accidents at Midway without expanding the airport's current boundaries," said Lipinski.

Last June, the U.S. DOT gave Chicago a \$15 million Airport Improvement Program grant to pay for the first phase of the arrestor bed project.

In January, Lipinski discussed the need for federal funding to complete the project with House Aviation Subcommittee Chairman Jerry Costello (D-12th) of downstate Belleville, and Federal Aviation Administration head Marion Blakey when they all toured Midway in January, and saw the arrestor bed installed last fall at the end of the runway where the fatal accident occurred.

With the new funding, the three other runways will also be equipped with the crushable concrete beds capable of slowing down planes that overshoot runways.

"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," said Lipinski.