



To: The Honorable Richard Carlson
Chairman, House Taxation Committee

February 16, 2012

T-WORKS FUNDING FOR KANSAS AIRPORTS

Background – Beginning in 1999, the Kansas Airport Improvement Program (KAIP) was funded at \$3 million per year to improve the declining pavement conditions at Kansas' 143 airports. Construction inflation since 1999 has greatly reduced the improvements that can be funded with the \$3 million annual budget.

Kansas airports have vital roles in public safety and economic development. Without local airports, rural Kansans are cut off from time critical air ambulance service. These services are necessary at all times of the day or night and in all weather conditions. To provide Kansans with this service, the airports need to have the following:

- 1) Runway of sufficient length (3500ft min) with good pavement conditions
- 2) Adequate lighting systems
- 3) Good instrument approaches
- 4) Automated Weather Observation Systems

KDOT's stated goal is to provide an air ambulance capable airport within a 30 minute drive for all Kansans. The following investments are necessary to meet these needs...

- Instrument approaches for 52 county airports
- Improvements to instrument approaches that are out-of-date
- Investment in Automated Weather Observation Systems
- Maintain runway pavement quality

The good news is these investments provide value to the community every day of the year in a variety of important ways...

- Economic development and support of local businesses – local airports have proven to be an important factor for businesses looking to relocate to, or expand within, a community.
- Emergency preparedness – airports are vital to rescue and recovery efforts during times of crisis.

T-Works – continued the funding level at \$3M per year with an increase to \$5M per year in 2014. Currently, airport maintenance and construction needs are *exceeding T-Works funding by 10-fold*. Recent changes to federal airport funding programs have increased the local share of projects (doubled, in most cases), thereby making the local community's ability to close this gap much more difficult.

In 1999, the statewide Pavement Condition Index (PCI) was at a very low score of 49. At that time, there were airports which were "black listed" by air ambulance providers due to the low quality of their pavements. Since then, KDOT's Airport Improvement Program funded projects which brought the PCI up to the current level of 71. KDOT's stated goal is to maintain an average PCI of 70. Currently, there are two airports with "poor" pavement ratings in danger of slipping to "very poor". As you can see, there is work to be done and just maintaining current pavements will be an ongoing job.

The Kansas Association of Airports respectfully requests that the existing KDOT funding levels be maintained without interruption for the following reasons...

- Maximizes Kansas' investments...as projects are delayed, the current pavement qualities will degrade. If the 50 airports currently requiring pavement action are unable to fund those repairs, the total cost of reconstruction is estimated to be \$140 million. In other words, the current funding plan is A VERY GOOD, LONG-TERM INVESTMENT.
- Continues the improvement of 'quality of life' benefits of critical care emergency transportation
- Necessary to promote expansion of existing business and industry, and to attract new employers
- The funding for Kansas airports represents only .0022% (yes, less than 1%) of KDOT's total budget, yet it is truly vital to the \$10 Billion economic impact of aviation in the state....this a tremendous value for Kansas taxpayers.