



## **Project Status Update**

**Prepared for the  
Will County Center for Economic Development**

**May 12, 2009**



**Illinois Department of Transportation**  
Division of Aeronautics



The IDOT Division of Aeronautics (Aeronautics) is the Sponsor of the proposed South Suburban Airport (SSA). SSA will be a new supplemental air carrier airport in Will County aimed at servicing Will County, Chicago's south suburbs, and beyond. SSA will serve a vital role in the region by providing a convenient and accessible venue for commercial passenger service, commercial cargo operations, as well as corporate and general aviation activities. While Aeronautics is the current Sponsor of SSA, the ultimate governing structure will be determined by the General Assembly.

### **Airport Master Plan/Environmental Impact Statement**

- Aeronautics is in the process of preparing an Airport Master Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).
- In March of 2008, Aeronautics submitted the initial Airport Layout Plan (ALP) to the FAA for the construction of an Inaugural Airport Runway and Passenger Terminal Complex. This plan provided the FAA with details regarding runway length, taxiway configuration, number of terminal gates, access roads, etc. to assist in the FAA's technical review of the facility.
- As part of their review of the ALP, the FAA asked Aeronautics to update the previously approved (2004) aviation forecasts. Aeronautics and their consultants are in the process of updating those forecasts.
- Aeronautics is conducting environmental surveys of on-site wetlands and floodplains and completing the remaining portions of the Airport Master Plan.
- After the FAA accepts the Master Plan and issues a Record of Decision (ROD) on the Environmental Impact Statement, the Sponsor may begin seeking Federal reimbursement for purchased land and begin construction of the airport.
- Aeronautics continues to work closely with the FAA and other Federal, State, and Local resource agencies to ensure the planning and environmental process continues smoothly.

### **Land Acquisition**

- Aeronautics has acquired 70 parcels (1,950 acres) of the 133 parcels of land needed within the Inaugural area. The Inaugural site will encompass approximately 5,000 acres, and could someday encompass over 20,000 acres in the Ultimate configuration.
- Aeronautics is working with IDOT's Chief Counsel to prepare for our first condemnation of unwilling sellers.
- Due to the state of the economy in late 2008, Aeronautics decided not to file for condemnation as previously expected. When the State's financial situation is more favorable, IDOT's Chief Counsel plans to work with the Office of the Attorney General to proceed with filing. Aeronautics remains hopeful this might be able to occur sometime during the second quarter of 2009.
- Aeronautics is in the process of evaluating the best use for SSA owned land located outside the current ultimate boundary (i.e. lots in Heatherbrook Estates, etc.). Options include: selling the properties in the near term, or retaining the properties for future sale at a later date.
- Aeronautics will request assistance from the General Assembly to ensure all proceeds from any sale of this land be returned back into the SSA project fund.



### **Bult Field**

- Bult Field (originally Sanger Field) is a privately owned general aviation airport located within the Inaugural airport boundary. Since acquiring Sanger Field, Mr. Jim Bult has made considerable investment in airfield improvements and new hangar and terminal facilities.
- Several alternatives are being considered for operation of Bult Field after purchase. These include: Aeronautics operation, private concessionaire operation, or an option to purchase with a long-term lease.

### **SSA Field Office**

- The Field Office serves as an on-site base of operations for the SSA project. It was originally a residential property within the inaugural footprint, but outside all FAA safety areas. Aeronautics remodeled the structure, converting bedrooms into offices and adding required ADA accessibility features.
- Project management, security, maintenance, property rental oversight, and land acquisition activities all operate from the Field Office.
- Situated within the communities SSA will impact, the Field Office provides a convenient location for local residents and provides a local “face” for the SSA project.
- The Field Office has become the preferred location to host meetings with stakeholders, including land owners, consultants, contractors, elected officials, and resource and regulatory agencies.
- Most recently, Aeronautics has used the Field Office in briefing Federal, State, and Local officials, including the FAA, US EPA, US Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service; Will County and municipal officials; and local government and business organizations.
- Director Shea and SSA staff continually brief the FAA, elected officials, landowners, and other interested parties to keep the lines of communication open. The Field Office maintains an open-door policy and welcomes anyone wishing to learn more about the SSA project.

*Please don't hesitate to discuss the project with us at [www.SouthSuburbanAirport.com](http://www.SouthSuburbanAirport.com).*