



## ***Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission***

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **New Taxiway Reducing Congestion, Increasing Safety at Guthrie-Edmond Airport**

Pilots flying in and out of the Guthrie-Edmond Regional Airport are finding it to be a whole lot easier these days to maneuver their aircraft between the runway and the airport hangars.

The airport recently completed construction of an additional connecting taxiway that joins the existing parallel taxiway to the aircraft hangar area.

Dale Williams, airport development manager for the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission (OAC) which provided a \$200,000 capital improvement grant for the project, said the new connecting taxiway enables pilots to taxi their aircraft around the airport with increased safety.

“Before they started construction on the new taxiway, the airport only had one connecting taxiway for aircraft to enter and exit the hangar area. Taxiing aircraft would sometimes have to pull over into ditches and wait for other planes to pass before they could approach the runway or hangars,” Williams said. “The connecting taxiway has certainly improved the flow of traffic and lessens the chance of collisions.”

In addition to creating less congestion on the taxiway, the new connecting taxiway also allows for future construction of additional hangars. According to airport manager Ron Groves, there are 110 aircraft currently housed in hangars at the airport with several more on a waiting list.

Groves said that jet traffic has increased at the airport since the construction of the connecting taxiway and the recent extension of the runway to more than 5,000 feet, the minimum runway-length distance jets need to take off and land safely. The OAC also provided major funding for the extension project through its Capital Improvement Program.

“The cities of Guthrie and Edmond want to establish their airport as a destination for general aviation, which includes business and industry. By extending the runway, it allows more jet traffic to come in here. Instead of seeing jets flying in every few months, now you see them coming several times a month,” Groves said.

Another indicator of more jet traffic at the Guthrie-Edmond airport is the recent increase in jet fuel sales.

“Jet fuel sales have gone up 122 percent and the airport’s fixed-based operator’s flight school business increased 47 percent since last year. What that tells me is that the runway extension is doing exactly what it was meant to do – bring in more jets. And once the Commission’s airport directory is updated to show that our runway is now 5,200 feet long rather than 4,200 feet, we expect the traffic to increase even more,” Groves said.

Groves said the Guthrie-Edmond airport is hoping to acquire more land in the future to construct more hangars and accommodate an aviation business looking to relocate. Several aviation and aerospace companies, including Spiritwing Aviation; Rocketplane Ltd.; Zivko Aeronautics, Inc.; and Joe Underwood and Son Aerial Pipeline Service, already lease hangar space at the airport.

OAC Director Victor Bird said that the runway extension and connecting taxiway projects at the Guthrie-Edmond airport are good examples of what can happen when state and local communities collaborate together to develop projects that help attract new companies to their town or cities.

“About 92 percent of Oklahoma’s population lives within 25 miles of a jet-capable runway, so it’s extremely important that our state’s system airports be ready, willing and able to provide the kinds of services and amenities that today’s business travelers and corporate executives want and expect when they are looking to land their corporate jets in certain locales,” Bird said. “This recent runway extension and connecting taxiway addition will no doubt have the potential to help bring in new business to central Oklahoma and possibly create more jobs.”

The OAC’s mission is to encourage, foster and assist in the development of aeronautics in Oklahoma and to encourage the establishment and maintenance of airports. This includes the preservation and improvement of the state's 114 public airports in communities throughout the state, which make up the State Airport System, and the promotion of aviation, one of the top employers in Oklahoma.

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**PHOTO CUTLINE:** Airport manager Ron Groves, right, discusses recent improvements at the Guthrie-Edmond Regional Airport with Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission (OAC) employees Dale Williams, left, and Vivek Kanna. Williams and Khanna were in Guthrie recently to perform a final inspection of the airport’s new connecting taxiway, which the OAC helped fund through a \$200,000 capital improvement grant.