



## **Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission**

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Wiley Post Airport Secures State Grant to Accommodate Aircraft**

**OKLAHOMA CITY** – Oklahoma City’s Wiley Post Airport has seen an increase in air traffic in recent years, especially from heavier aircraft. The airport, for the most part, has been able to handle the heavier loads because of improvements made to its runways and taxiways nearly a decade ago. However, despite those improvements, there are still some areas on the airport that cannot support larger, much heavier aircraft.

But now, thanks to a grant from the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission, Wiley Post Airport may soon be hanging out the welcome sign to a greater number of those heavier aircraft.

Commissioners recently gave their approval to a \$163,684 grant to Wiley Post Airport that will be used toward the first of three phases to reconstruct and strengthen the airport’s parallel taxiway. Total cost of phase I will be more than \$2.7 million. Phase II and Phase III, when completed, should cost an additional \$5 million. Federal funds will cover most of the costs associated with the entire project.

The grant is part of the Commission’s Capital Improvement Program, which provides state funding to Oklahoma airports for various capital needs, such as runway maintenance and construction; installation of navigational aids; land purchases; and installation and repair of airfield lights and signage.

“Wiley Post plays a crucial role in Oklahoma’s economy, especially in central Oklahoma, by providing a means for business and industry to transport commerce throughout the state,” Commission Director Victor Bird said. “As with all of our community airports, Wiley Post serves as a gateway to the world for many people and businesses such as Dobson Communications, Express Personnel Services, MidFirst Bank and Mathis Brothers Furniture. And the list goes on and on.

“Anytime we help improve an airport, whether it’s through a runway or taxiway project or some other worthy project, we are improving our state and ensuring a safe and efficient air transportation system.”

Scott Keith, airport manager at Wiley Post, said that several operators and charter companies of larger and heavier aircraft have told him that they would like to use their planes at Wiley Post, but because of weight restrictions at the airport, they are forced to use smaller, lighter aircraft.

“As with anything, we have been trying to play catch up during the past few years and are getting to the point where we can start making those pavements consistent with the runway weights so that we can get

ourselves in the right frame to handle these aircraft,” Keith told commissioners during the August 5 Commission meeting.

According to its Web site, nearly 400 aircraft are currently based at Wiley Post Airport, ranging in size from single-engine planes to corporate jets. Approximately 80,000 combined landings and takeoffs were logged at the airport last year. The airport is also home to nearly 50 aviation-related businesses, including two large fixed-base operators, Atlantic Aviation and The Servicenter. All together, those businesses generate more than 1,000 jobs and nearly \$52 million in annual payrolls. Direct expenditures from airport-related activities exceed \$97 million a year.

The Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission's mission is to promote aviation, which includes fostering the growth of the aerospace industry and ensuring that the needs of commerce and communities across Oklahoma are met by the state's 114 public airports.