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January 15, 2013

MAYOR LANDRIEU AND AIRPORT OFFICIALS UNVEIL ARMSTRONG INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IMPROVEMENTS

NEW ORLEANS, LA-- Today, Mayor Mitch Landrieu, airport and regional officials unveiled more than \$300 million in improvements at the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport, part of an Airport Modernization Program that includes a new and bright interior with a refurbished ticket lobby, expanded concourse, improved baggage claim, remodeled restrooms, updated exterior, a new car rental facility and new retail and restaurant offerings.

"The Louis Armstrong International Airport is the front door to our city for millions of tourists and business travellers each year, so it's critical that we provide them with a better quality experience more consistent with the hospitality our city and region are known for," said New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu. "These are necessary improvements that will help sustain the airport for several years. And with the Super Bowl XLVII putting New Orleans on the world stage, the timing couldn't be better."

"We are proud of the transformation that Armstrong International has undergone with our modernization program", said Director of Aviation Iftikhar Ahmad. "To complete the program within this window in advance of Super Bowl XLVII is a testament to the hard work of those who have been involved with the modernization."

Nolan V. Rollins, Chairman, New Orleans Aviation Board, said "The airport's capital program is a big win for our city. It shows the commitment to providing an exceptional experience for our leisure and business travelers, and positions us well for continued growth."

Completed improvements include:

- Addition of six gates with new concession and restroom space on Concourse D;
- New aircraft rescue & firefighting station;
- Complete rehabilitation of older restrooms and upgrades to newer restrooms;

- New flat panel monitors to display flight information;
- Consolidated rental car facility for all agencies within walking distance to terminal;
- New window walls and improved lighting in ticket lobby;
- Upper and lower roadway improvements;
- New passenger loading bridges for airline gates;
- Terminal & Baggage Claim improvements;
- New overhead roadway signage;
- Runway 10-28 approach lights realignment; and
- New taxiway created from unused general aviation runway.

The improvements include a new in-airport TV network called ClearVision, which will have television programming and a welcome message from Mayor Landrieu. Airport upgrades also include new plant scaping, furniture, reupholstered gate seating, new carpet, expanded checkpoints, and decorative accents. Southwest Airline is renovating Concourse B, and the State of Louisiana is repaving the airport access road. Passengers flying into and out of the New Orleans also can enjoy the tastes of New Orleans with the opening of Zatairain's Kitchen, Copeland's Cheesecake Bistro and the iconic Dooky Chase restaurant, among others. New retail establishments also have opened recently, including a Saints store and Perlis Cajun Clothing store.

District D Councilmember Cynthia Hedge-Morell, Chairwoman Airport Committee, said, "First impressions are critical, and this airport will be New Orleans' first impression on thousands of Super Bowl fans and Mardi Gras revelers in the coming weeks. These updates will allow us to put our best foot forward as we welcome these visitors to the greatest city in America."

Councilmember at-Large Jacqueline Brechtel Clarkson said, "This is finally the revolution we have been waiting for and deserved for a very long time! These improvements will make a huge difference in building the quality of tourism and the population of our city."

District A Councilmember Susan Guidry said, "Well over 8.5 million passengers traveled through The Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport last year. The airport is the first impression that millions of national and international visitors have of our city and our region. We now have a beautiful, world class facility to welcome our visitors and our residents. "

District B Councilmember LaToya Cantrell said, "These remarkable improvements to Louis Armstrong International Airport were a long time coming; and I believe I can speak for all New Orleanians when I say that we welcome the expanded concourse and improved baggage areas, not to mention the new eateries and retailers. These upgrades are a part of our city's continuing effort to provide first-rate facilities to residents and visitors alike and securing its place among the world's great metropolises."

District C Councilmember Kristin Gisleson Palmer said, "Today is a win for residents and tourists alike, as these state of the art transportation facilities are vital to our city and region's economic and business development. This renovation and modernization of Armstrong International Airport further solidifies New Orleans as one of the premier travel destinations in the nation."

District E Councilmember James Gray said, "The airport is often a visitor's first glimpse of the city," said District E Councilman James A. Gray II. "The \$300 million modernization of the Louis Armstrong International Airport will leave every tourist with the correct impression that New Orleans--while known for its historic culture and old world charm-- is a thoroughly modern city posed for growth in the 21st century."

Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport is owned by the City of New Orleans and governed by the New Orleans Aviation Board. In the last 2 ½ years, the Airport has:

- Hired a new director of aviation;
- Reformed contracting, credit card and take home car policies;
- Increased revenue and passenger totals;
- Upgraded its bond ratings;
- Expanded air service including new airlines such as Spirit, Air Canada, and Frontier and new destinations including Kansas City, Milwaukee, San Francisco and Toronto;
- Received approval to operate charter flights to Cuba;
- Expanded its relationship with Southwest Airlines, which is increasing its flights by 35%; and
- Restaurant and retail hours of operation were expanded from 8am-5pm to 5am-8pm daily.

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