



## **Armstrong seeks \$30.8 million for Critical Safety Projects**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – August 18, 2009, New Orleans – The Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport is requesting recovery dollars from the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA) to fund three critical life safety projects.

New Orleans Aviation Board (NOAB) Chairman Dan Packer will request funds totaling over \$30 million tomorrow morning at the Louisiana Recovery Authority meeting in Baton Rouge. Projects include a \$17 million hardened, flood-resistant utility building, a \$10.3 million new Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) Station, and a new \$3.5 million Airfield Lighting Vault. "These three projects are critical to keeping the Airport operational in all circumstances", said Chairman Packer.

The need for a new utility building was made apparent in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, when the Airport was without electricity for three days. In spite of heat and poor conditions, tens of thousands of people were evacuated to safety through the Airport in the first days following the storm. A FEMA Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT) field hospital was housed at the Airport, along with countless federal and local agencies who performed rescue operations in the region. At the time, since back-up generators supplied only limited lighting, there was no air conditioning to ease the discomfort of the circumstances. The new 2500 kw generator will provide about 1/3 of the normal terminal electrical loading. That amount will be sufficient to maintain basic HVAC throughout the terminal building, limiting mold due to humidity and moisture intrusion and maintaining emergency/crisis response concourse and terminal operations. "We are proud of the critical role the Airport played in the aftermath of our region's worst disaster. However, we want to be better prepared to operate effectively in any type of future emergency situations. The Airport's hazard mitigation plan indicates the need for additional power generation and emergency water service to maintain critical life safety functions at the Airport, and the utility building will provide additional back up power generators, switchgear and associated systems and will house the Airport's emergency fire water supply system. It is essential to function effectively no matter what conditions exist."

A new ARFF Station will allow Armstrong to maintain Federal Aviation Administration standards for an airport of its size. The current facility has outlived its useful life and will not accommodate the size of modern ARFF vehicles. The new facility will meet post September 11<sup>th</sup> emergency response standards for new aircraft and terminal facilities and have the capacity to be expanded as needs grow.

The new Airfield Lighting Vault is needed to relocate the current airfield lighting vault inside the Airport Air Operations Area and to replace obsolete control system components and eliminate functional defects that have been attributed to recent failures. The relocation to a site within the Airfield Operations Area will make the facility more secure. Chairman Packer stated, "This is another key safety element that was non-functioning after Hurricane Katrina, thereby limiting flights to day operations during clear weather conditions. Even during normal rainfall events, darkness or foggy conditions, airfield lighting is essential to safe operations."

"We are hopeful that the LRA will favorably look upon our request for funding these critical life safety projects which benefit the entire region," concluded Packer.

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