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Gary gets ready to celebrate major accomplishment at the Gary/Chicago International Airport *Top priority for Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson nears completion*

GARY (June 15, 2015) – Just days after the final strip of pavement of was laid to complete the Runway Expansion Project at Gary/Chicago International Airport, Gary Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson is reflecting on the journey to the finish line and preparing to officially open the 8,900 foot runway.

“The Runway Expansion Project has been one of the top priorities for me as Mayor of Gary,” said Mayor Freeman-Wilson. “I am so proud and excited to officially open the runway next month and usher in a new chapter at Gary/Chicago International Airport.”

While the runway will be open for planes on June 25 in line with the Federal Aviation Administration’s mandate, the Airport will officially open the runway with a ribbon cutting and celebration on July 10.

Governor Mike Pence recently visited the airport and met with executive director Dan Vicari and board chairman Stephen Mays.

“We were thrilled to welcome Governor Pence to the airport and show off all the progress we’ve made on the runway expansion,” said chairman Mays.

The Runway Expansion Project was a huge, 10-year undertaking. To give you an idea of just how big, take a look at some of these project stats:

- 577,000 tons of soil were removed, more than twice the weight of the Willis Tower
- 4,045 yards of fencing were installed, enough to wrap around U.S. Steel Yard stadium nearly 7 times
- 4.6 miles of new railroad track were installed, enough to wrap around the Indianapolis Motor Speedway two times

The new railroad track was installed following the removal of the CN tracks that ran between the existing and new sections of runway. The October 2014 “cutover” was a major turning point for the expansion, which had been stalled by the physical barrier of the tracks.

“Few people really understood all of the dimensions of the work done at the airport,” said Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson. “This was a federal mandate that required a barrier removal which could only be accomplished through the rerouting and/or realignment of three class one railroads. This project

was also complicated by the involvement of multiple regulatory agencies at the state and federal. All of airport board members and staff involved with this project since its inception are to be commended.”

The extended 8,900 foot runway will allow for larger aircraft and broader destinations.

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