

# Airport report

## Accountability & Transparency at MSY

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Over one year ago, I reported to readers of the Airport Report that the New Orleans Aviation Board (NOAB) and staff had taken significant steps to enhance a sense of accountability and transparency at Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport. Very soon after I joined the MSY team in 2010, the Aviation Board requested audits through Harold A. Asher, CPA as a means of increasing transparency. In the early fall of that year after having studied the workings of the Airport, I submitted my 100 Day Report to the Board with a recommendation for audits after identifying significant system risks. These included a lack of policies and procedures and internal controls, lack of staff to conduct core business and findings of disproportionate revenues and expenses. I also recommended that the fleet of airport vehicles be significantly reduced and a new over-time policy for NOAB employees be set after Asher's audit review of NOAB Overtime (posted on the Airport website, [www.flymsy.com](http://www.flymsy.com)).

In January 2011, Asher issued his audit review of Credit Card and Travel Expenses (posted on the Airport website) and the NOAB Finance Committee and Board approved a new travel and credit card policy for Board Members and the Director of Aviation. As an addendum to their mandate, I issued a new credit card, travel and business expense policy for the NOAB staff. In addition, the number of credit cards issued was reduced from 6 (2009) to 1 (2011); expenditures for convention and travel were reduced from \$123K (2009) to \$70K (2011).

In a proactive move with the support of New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu, the NOAB invited the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) in the summer of 2011 to perform further audits at the Airport. At the October 2011 NOAB board meeting, Inspector General Ed Quatrevaux introduced himself and made a presentation to the Board outlining the intent of the OIG to conduct a thorough audit review for whatever time span would be necessary. The Board has subsequently provided office space to include telephone, IT support and printer, Fraud Reporting Signage, access to records/information and all NOAB employees and contractors. In kind, the OIG provided Fraud Awareness Training for all NOAB Managers and a confidential drop box for any fraud alerts. After the Asher credit card and travel expense

audit review was issued, the OIG began performing an additional review of the credit card activity for the period of January 2008 through October 2010. A report on their findings was issued the third week of March 2012. On October 18, 2011, the OIG issued a Follow-Up Report on its August 2009 Fleet Control Performance Review and the NOAB staff issued a management response and plan to address the follow-up findings. By January of this year, all of the OIG follow-up findings were corrected by our staff. They included reducing take-home vehicles by 90% from 21 to 2, implementing a fuel tracking vehicle maintenance program, new disposal of vehicles, inventory and driver license policies (issued 12/2011), new pool vehicle policy and procedure (issued and implemented 12/2011), and establish internal processes to report take-home vehicle use to the City of New Orleans for fringe benefit withholdings. The NOAB is awaiting confirmation from the OIG that it is in 100% compliance of the past findings. Responding to a directive by the Board to discover any other issues, the staff identified deficiencies regarding a large number of expired/absent contracts. They have deployed internal and external resources to accomplish 60 solicitations and 91 contracts/amendments and have to date completed 16 solicitations and negotiated contracts providing \$25 million in current and future savings over the 5 year term. The OIG has contacted the staff regarding solicitations, procurements and contracts. In an effort to maintain an air of transparency, the monthly financial reports, audits, my Airport credit card reports and numerous other Airport documents are posted for the public to view on the Airport website, [www.flymsy.com](http://www.flymsy.com). As servants of the public, the NOAB leadership and staff are committed to being openly accountable for their decisions, actions and mistakes. Having the public's trust is primary in our mission to make our airport the best it can be, inside and out. ✈



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