As a government entity, transparency and accountability in the way we conduct the business of the airport are essential for establishing trust by the publics we serve. The governing body responsible for oversight of Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport, the New Orleans Aviation Board (NOAB), understands this and is being proactive in establishing measures that will enhance that trust factor. The NOAB is a nine member board that serves with no compensation. All members are appointed by the Mayor of New Orleans. Representatives from Kenner and St. Charles Parish serve on the NOAB and are recommended by their respective government entities.

At the January NOAB Finance Committee meeting, the Committee endorsed the implementation of more stringent policies and procedures regarding board activities. The new policies and procedures come as a result of two self-directed reports analyzing internal compliance. The analyses reviewed select NOAB credit card activity as well as travel and entertainment transactions for the period 2008 to the present. The analyses reports recommended additional policies to ensure even better management, transparency and monitoring of activity. The voluntary analyses were also a result from recommendations adopted by the NOAB that I made in my 100 Day Report to them in September. The entire report can be viewed on the airport website, www.flymsy.com.

Nolan Rollins, our new Chairman of the NOAB said, “New leadership has brought in a new era for Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport. We contracted these reports to take careful consideration of prior missteps, current areas for improvement and future changes. Through this scrutiny and a strong collective determination for self improvement, we have established the gold standard for our board and governance.”

Based on the findings in the analyses report, the NOAB Finance Committee proposed and unanimously approved implementing new policies regarding:

- Attendance and expenses for conventions and training
- Travel and entertainment expenses
- Community related activities
- Expense monitoring systems
- Establishing annual budgets in the above areas

Harold A. Asher, CPA, was contracted by the NOAB to conduct the analyses. Asher collaborated with board members and the NOAB staff to facilitate the development of the best possible policies and procedures.

The two reports and the additional policies and procedures are important in continuing the momentum toward significant improvements. To further the efforts of the NOAB to conduct enhanced oversight in the operation of Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport, we have begun a search to hire two internal auditors as permanent staff to allow for continuous audits and review of all airport business and performance. In an effort to actively disclose and provide access to airport information, the two reports and the statement by the Finance Committee Chair are posted online on the airport website for viewing by the general public. For more information or to review the reports, visit http://www.flymsy.com/transparentMSY.

Accountability is being answerable for performance or results, both good and bad. The NOAB and staff are aware of this fact and are committed to being openly accountable for their decisions, actions and mistakes. Having the public’s trust is paramount in our pursuit of excellence.

By Iftikhar Ahmad
Director of Aviation

Establishing “Gold Standard” Governance

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