

# Airport report

## New Airport Developments

**By Iftikhar Ahmad**  
Director of Aviation

As Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport continues its modernization of the existing airport campus by Super Bowl 2013, the challenge by New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu to develop a “world class airport” has been heard and preliminary steps to address the directive are underway. The first step has been to publicly solicit for consultant teams that will study and analyze the concept of a new airport terminal. These solicitations include Program Management, Design Services, Environmental Assessment, Land-Use and Development and Financial Feasibility. The consultant teams will be looking at two construction options. The first would add new terminals to the west of the existing structure and the second would construct a new main terminal on airport property between the east-west runway and Veterans Highway/Interstate 10. Four firms have competed to act as the project manager for the study and their responsibility will be to oversee the other consultants who would coordinate with the New Orleans Aviation Board staff and the other consultant teams. Either option is estimated to cost more than \$1 billion and will be financed through a combination of airport resources. The goal will be, as stated by New Orleans Aviation Board Chairman Nolan Rollins, to ensure that the costs for this effort are not passed on to the general public.

In other airport news, a new passenger screening program - TSA PreCheck™, initiated last year to make it more convenient for select passengers is being expanded to a number of major airports that includes Armstrong International. TSA has been criticized for using a “one size fits all” screening process and has developed this new program to better serve the traveling public. The TSA PreCheck™ screening concept enhances aviation security by enabling Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to focus on passengers the agency knows less about and those who are considered high-risk, while providing expedited screening for travelers who volunteer information about themselves prior to flying. If TSA determines a passenger is eligible for expedited screening through the TSA PreCheck™ vetting process, information will be embedded in the barcode of the passenger’s boarding pass. TSA will read the barcode at the checkpoint and the passenger may be referred to a lane where they will undergo expedited screening, which could include no longer removing the following items: shoes, 3-1-1 compliant bag from carry-on,

laptop from its bag, light outerwear/jacket or a belt if in wear at the time of the security screening. Travelers who are presently eligible for this new screening program will likely be passengers who participate in Delta Air Lines and American Airlines frequent flier and trusted traveler programs. Additional airlines may be participating by the end of the year. The announcement by the TSA states that there will be no cost to eligible passengers to participate in the program. To date, the federal agency states over 300,000 passengers have been screened through this program since testing began. For more information about this program, visit [www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov).

Another item of extreme importance to the Airline Industry is the recent passing of long term funding of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Last year, the agency experienced a two-week partial shutdown due to a delay in action by Congress to extend their funding. This resulted in the interruption of approximately 250 Airport Improvement Projects (AIP) at airports nationwide. On Monday, February 6, the U.S. Senate voted 75-20 with the House passing its bill on the previous Friday. After 1,590 days and 23 short-term extensions, Congress has finally given the FAA a four-year \$64 billion funding bill. The bill will strengthen some proposed barriers to labor elections, trim the Essential Air Service program, allow eight new daily round trip long-distance flights at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport and marshal 90 percent of the recently crafted “Passenger Bill of Rights.” This long term funding should help fund phases of our new airport endeavor.

Ongoing improvements in the Airline Industry will hopefully make the passenger’s traveling experience more pleasant at Armstrong International Airport and throughout the nation’s entire Airport System. ✈



*Iftikhar Ahmad, director of aviation for Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport may be reached at [director@flymsy.com](mailto:director@flymsy.com). You can follow the airport on Facebook at [facebook.com/MSYAirport](https://facebook.com/MSYAirport) and Twitter @NO\_Airport. Also, view “Airport Alive” on the airport website, [www.flymsy.com](http://www.flymsy.com). **Want to be a volunteer at the airport? To find out how, click on Ambassador on the airport website.***