

*Press Office*  
City of Chicago, Department of Aviation  
Richard L. Rodriguez, Commissioner



# News Release

**December 31, 2008**

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## **CHICAGO'S AIRPORTS MADE HISTORY AND WELCOMED NEW ARRIVALS IN 2008**

*City reached landmark agreement for long-term lease of Midway,  
opened new O'Hare runway and appointed new Aviation Commissioner*

CHICAGO – The Chicago Department of Aviation today recognized its accomplishments and significant milestones at O'Hare and Midway International Airports in 2008:

In May, the Chicago City Council approved Mayor Richard M. Daley's nomination to appoint Richard L. Rodriguez as Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Aviation. As head of the Chicago Airport System, Rodriguez oversees the management, planning, design, operation and maintenance of O'Hare and Midway International Airports.

In September, Mayor Richard M. Daley announced the winning bid of \$2.5 billion from Midway Investment and Development Company, LLC for the long-term concession and lease of Midway. This transaction represents a landmark, long-term airport privatization opportunity in the U.S that will provide unprecedented benefits for the traveling public, the airlines and the taxpayers of Chicago.

The City's plan to modernize O'Hare reached a major milestone with the opening of a new 7,500 foot runway and new air traffic control tower in November, and the commissioning of a 3,000 foot extension to the airport's busiest runway in September. The full build-out of the O'Hare Modernization Program will substantially reduce delays and increase capacity, securing Chicago's key role as the center of the global aviation system.

The Department of Aviation also welcomed new international service to Chicago in 2008. Italy's Air One began service to Milan from O'Hare and Canada's Porter Airlines brought international service back to Midway with flights to Toronto. This summer Great Wall Airlines began new air cargo service from O'Hare to Shanghai, via Seattle and Seoul.

Also in 2008, the Department of Aviation introduced several new amenities and services, many with local flair and flavor, to enhance the travel experience:

- More -

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- A host of new Chicago-based restaurants and shops opened or expanded locations at O'Hare including: BJ's Market and Bakery, Barbara's Bookstore, Garrett Popcorn Shops, Goose Island Beer Company, Nuts on Clark, Vosges Haut Chocolate and Stefani's Tuscany Café. Other new concessions at O'Hare include Auntie Anne's Pretzels, CIBO Express, The Grove, Hoypoloi, Johnny Rockets, Oakley Eyewear, Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory and Smoothie King.
- O'Hare added four new works to its permanent art collection including: two 16-foot wide lit geometric sculptures, or "Beacons," suspended from the ceiling in Terminal 5; a 50-foot-long blown-glass painted mural entitled "Jet Trails" suspended onto window mullions in Terminal 1; a limestone and marble mosaic from Chicago's sister city Amman, Jordan entitled "Treasury of Petra" in Terminal 5; and a 40-foot by 8-foot mural entitled "Songs of Chicago" in Terminal 1.
- In April, the Department officially launched *Terminal Tunes*, a re-vamped overhead music program and Web site that exclusively features artists who are either from the Chicago area or record for locally based record labels. The award-winning program was developed in collaboration with the Chicago Music Commission. The program received a first place award from Airports Council International – North America (ACI-NA) for the PR campaign surrounding the launch of this music program at both O'Hare and Midway. The campaign features all local Chicago music, selling the CDs in select retail outlets and providing live music in the terminals.
- In October, O'Hare and Midway dressed up to support Fashion Focus Chicago 2008, highlighting the city's burgeoning fashion industry. O'Hare hosted a series of impromptu fashion shows and housed a large fashion exhibit staffed with fashion concierges from the Chicago Office of Tourism.
- Earlier this year, the Department of Aviation and the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority teamed up to install a flight information display system (FIDS) at McCormick Place, the largest convention center in North America. The display mirrors flight information monitors at airports and assists visitors traveling to O'Hare and Midway.

At the Chicago Airport System, passenger safety and security is our primary focus. In 2008, significant safety-enhancing developments took place at both airports:

- Engineered Material Arresting Systems (EMAS) were installed at each end of Runway 4R-22L at O'Hare. These arrestor beds are made of a lightweight, crushable concrete that can absorb the energy of a 250,000 pound aircraft and bring it to a rapid stop if it were to veer off a runway. EMAS was installed at the end of every major runway at Midway.
- In July, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) announced plans to install Runway Status Light Systems (RWSL) at O'Hare by 2015 and at Midway at a future date. RWSL will provide illuminated red in-pavement lights to indicate to pilots that a runway is unsafe for entry or is unsafe for take-off due to traffic on the runway.

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- In November, the Department of Aviation held a full-scale emergency response disaster drill at O'Hare. The airport is required by the (FAA) to hold a full-scale airport emergency plan exercise at least once every three years. Twenty-five city departments and state agencies, ambulance and fire companies from surrounding suburbs participated in the drill to test emergency response procedures in the event of a major airfield incident.

This year, more homes and schools received sound insulation under the Department's Residential and School Sound Insulation Programs (RSIP/SSIP). These programs are recognized as the most aggressive in the nation.

- More than 11,000 single-family and multi-unit dwellings have been insulated through the RSIP, now in its 13<sup>th</sup> year. The SSIP is in its eighth year, and has reduced the impact of aircraft noise in 151 schools and in the communities located near O'Hare and Midway International Airports.

The Chicago Airport System was the recipient of several honors in 2008:

- Midway received the highest rating among medium-size airports in the J.D. Power and Associates annual Airport Satisfaction Study, released in May. The study was based on responses from more than 21,000 passengers who traveled between April 2007 and March 2008.
- Midway received the ACI-NA 2008 Second Place Industry award in the "Best New Retail Concept" category for the Life is Good store.
- O'Hare received the "Best Convenience Program - Richard A. Griesbach Excellence in Airport Concessions" award, the industry's highest award for overall concessions program.
- The Chicago Airport System's Web site, [www.flychicago.com](http://www.flychicago.com), was named as one of the world's top 10 airport Web sites by Airfarewatchdog.com\*. Flychicago.com was rated as the second best U.S. Web site, with Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport; Dallas/Fort Worth, Denver and San Francisco International Airports rounding out the domestic list.

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The Chicago Airport System is self-supporting, using no local or state tax dollars for operations or capital improvements at O'Hare and Midway International airports. Together, Chicago's airports generate more than \$45 billion in annual economic activity and create 540,000 jobs for the region. Please visit [www.flychicago.com](http://www.flychicago.com) to learn more about the Chicago Airport System.

\*Airfarewatchdog.com is comparable to other travel information sites such as Orbitz and Travelocity. The ratings were determined solely by the Web site's staff.

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