

Airport makes changes to avoid a winter disaster

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Officials at Detroit Wayne County Metropolitan Airport are hoping equipment purchases and operational changes will help ease the air traffic gluts during snow storms.

They expect the opening of a third de-icing pad later this month near the end of the airport's runways will make planes safer by preventing the accumulation of ice on the planes, but also allow for better air traffic management and quicker departures for passengers in winter weather.

On Nov. 4, Wayne County commissioners also approved the lease of five snow blower trucks with 18-inch brooms for \$1.9 million with C.E. Pollard of Detroit. The county will execute a Ford Motor Credit Municipal Lease for five years, with a \$1 buyout.

Deicing used to be completed near the airport's gates. Work crews used to move equipment from gate to gate, which took time, according to Detroit Metro Airport spokesman Mike Conway. The new pad will help clear those gates.

"Gates will remain available for other flights," Conway said.

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Mike Conway
—Detroit Metro Airport

That should help Northwest Airlines, which is Metro's principal carrier with more than 70 percent of the airport's 31 million annual passengers.

The Federal Aviation Administration had issued an advisory earlier this year that stated that airports in cold-weather cities should build deicing pads if planes face long taxis from gates to runways. Accumulated ice and snow can affect the lift of airplanes.

The three pads also should help prevent air traffic tie-ups similar to those created during the Jan. 2 snowstorm when many planes containing scores of holiday travelers remained on taxiways for several hours. While the de-icing procedures were not attributed as a cause for the airport delays, the snows and winds were attributed to Northwest's flight crews inability to get to the airport.

The third pad was built at a cost of \$11.2 million and contains six tanks that can hold up

to 10,000 gallons of deicing fluid. That fluid, glycol, will be recycled by EQ-The Environmental Co., a firm that paid Metro \$50,000 for a three-year contract.

With the two deicing pads and a program to recycle glycol, the county's costs for sewer and water use went from \$1.3 million in 1997-98 to \$923,460 in 1998-99, a decline of 30 percent, Conway said.

The five new snow blower trucks will be used after plows during snow removal operations. "Brooms will be attached to the trucks for use during light snows, or as a finishing task after the snow plows," said Brian Lassaline, airport spokesman.

The trucks are expected to arrive in December, Lassaline said.

Commissioners also approved a \$127,000 contract with Standby Power Inc. of Redford for the purchase and installation of a 500-kilowatt backup generator for Detroit Metro Airport's Fire Station, as required for FAA regulations and Y2K compliance.

A resolution authorizing condemnation proceedings related to the acquisition of one-half acre for Runway 4/22 (Crane Road) at Metro Airport also was approved by commissioners.

Professor awarded Rotary scholarship

Stanley Ngeyi, chairman and professor of physical and applied science at Madonna University and an Xpilianti resident, was awarded a \$10,000 Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholarship to teach science at the University of Buea in Cameroon, Africa.

Ngeyi will take a sabbatical from Madonna during either the winter 2000 or 2001 term to teach thermodynamics and quantum chemistry in Cameroon.

He also plans to visit area high schools.

MADONNA UNIVERSITY

"I feel I have a lot to offer this newly formed university," Ngeyi said. "I hope to create a liaison or collaboration in teaching and/or research with professors at the university, and possibly help establish a strong physical chemistry base."

This is the third consecutive year that a Madonna University faculty member has received the award.

Gerald Charbonneau, an assistant professor of sociology and social work, spent the winter 1999 semester in Morelia, Mexico, teaching conflict resolution, sociology, and social work at Vasco de Quiroga University; and Dr. Afif Jawad, associate professor of physical and applied science, is working with science teachers in Lebanon during the fall 1999 term.

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