

P R E S S R E L E A S E



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ST. JOHN AIRPORT BOASTS LONGER RUNWAY, READY FOR LARGER AIRCRAFT

RESERVE, LA.

On Friday, July 12th, Executive Director Joel T. Chaisson, along with members of the Board of Commissioners, proudly showcased the new extension of runway 17-35 at the St. John Airport. Designed by Professional Engineering Consultants Corporation and constructed by Byron E. Talbot Contractor, Inc., the project included an extension of 746 feet to the north and 405 feet to the south of the existing runway (elongating the airstrip from 4,000 feet to 5,151 feet), the extension of the taxiway, and the addition of a 3,400 square-yard taxiway turnaround.

Senator Gary Smith, Representative Clay Schexnayder, LA DOTD’s Aviation Program Supervisor Wade Troth, and officials from the FAA and St. John the Baptist Parish were on hand as Joel T. Chaisson made the presentation, his last as Executive Director. “The bigger and better St. John Airport gets, the better the local economy does,” exclaimed Chaisson. “We are investing, building, and growing the airport to make that happen.” In fact, there is interest in a parcel of land at the airport to establish a new manufacturing facility that requires the availability of commercial and general aviation.

The \$2.8 million project began construction in November 2012 and was funded in part by \$1,700,000 from Louisiana State General Fund and \$575,000 from the Louisiana State General Obligations Bonds. The ongoing improvements will allow the airport to better serve the needs of general aviation, military and corporate aircraft. “With the longer runway, St. John Airport can now handle small business and corporate jets,” says Airport Director Kent Greene. “Just that alone helps the local economy, not to mention, makes it a little easier to land new business and industry in the region.” “A mile of highway will take you a mike. A mile of runway will take you wherever you want to go,” said Troth, summing up the importance of the improvements to the runway and to the airport overall.

The extended runway is just the first of several planned improvements for St. John Airport. Arrangements are being made to secure Jet-A fuel as a service to the larger aircraft that are utilizing the airport. In addition, the terminal building, which was damaged during Hurricane Isaac in August 2012, is being redesigned with many upgrades in mind.



Joel T. Chaisson, his last appearance as Executive Director. Paul Aucoin steps in on July 15th.



Pictured L-R: St. John Parish Councilman Marvin Perrilloux, Incoming Executive Director Paul Aucoin, St. John Parish Councilman Larry Snyder, PSL Commissioner Robert "Poncho" Roussel, Former Executive Director Joel T. Chaisson, St. John Parish Councilman Lennix Madere, Jr., PSL Commission President Louis A. Joseph, PSL Commission Secretary D. Paul Robichaux, St. John Parish Councilman Michael Wright, Louisiana Senator Gary Smith, LA DOTD Aviation Program Supervisor Wade Troth, PSL Commissioner Stanley Bazile, St. John Parish CAO Randy Vincent, St. John Parish Sheriff Mike Tregre, Evergreen Baptist Church Pastor Nolan W. Albert, Louisiana State Representative Clay Schexnayder, PSL Airport Director Kent Greene, PAL Executive Director Joe Accardo, and St. James Parish Councilman James Brazan



LA DOTD Aviation Program Supervisor Wade Troth, Commission Secretary D. Paul Robichaux, Commission President Louis A. Joseph, Incoming Executive Director Paul Aucoin, Louisiana Senator Gary Smith, Commissioner Stanley Bazile, Commissioner P. Joey Murray III, and Commission Treasurer Joseph Scontrino



First use of the 5,151-foot runway by military plane immediately following the ribbon cutting.

The Port of South Louisiana, a 54-mile port district on the Mississippi River between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, is the largest tonnage port in the Western Hemisphere. The cargo it handles accounts for over 50 percent of all Louisiana imports/exports.

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