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T.F. Green Airport expansion program takes flight

October 20, 2014 - Rhode Island

Recently we met with U.S. Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx and Federal Aviation Administration administrator Michael Heurta, Rhode Island governor Lincoln Chafee, U.S. senators Jack Reed and Sheldon Whitehouse, representatives Jim Langevin and David Cicilline, and Rhode Island Airport Corporation President and CEO Kelly Fredericks to highlight T.F. Green Airport's comprehensive improvement project, including enhancing safety, building a new de-icing facility and extending the runway, to name just a few.

For more than a decade, federal, state and local officials have worked collaboratively on this multifaceted initiative. Three years ago, the Federal Aviation Administration approved plans to extend the primary runway. The longer runway will help make our airport more competitive and pave the way for longer distance flights. That, in turn, will provide residents and tourists alike with more travel options.

The tourism and hospitality industries are vital components of our city's economic development engine. In fact, Warwick's hotel occupancy rate for the month of July alone was 83%, up 4.1% over last year. Additionally, the hotel occupancy rate in our city on Friday and Saturday nights through the month of July was 96%. The T.F. Green Airport expansion project will enable us to build upon our success, attract more visitors, bolster our local tourism industry, and spur economic development throughout the city.

As various components of the airport's improvement plan continue through December 2017, the good news at T.F. Green Airport doesn't end there. Beginning next summer, Condor Airlines will start regularly-scheduled seasonal service from Frankfurt, Germany to T.F. Green Airport. This new international service will provide our residents and area travelers with direct flights to Frankfurt.

Studies have revealed that German travelers rank as one of the top inbound visitors to our state, and this new service will make it easier for them to travel here, increasing our capability to bring more international travelers to our city and state and fuel our tourism industry.

T.F. Green Airport's ongoing enhancement projects are yet another example of how Warwick is truly the City on the Move.

Scott Avedisian is the mayor of Warwick and the chairman of the RIPTA board of directors.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540