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Harvey Acoustic Windows bring quiet to airport homeowners

June 15, 2018 - Construction Design & Engineering

Waltham, MA Peace and quiet. That's all homeowners near some of the country's largest airports are requesting. With the help of Sound Abatement Projects and acoustical windows from Harvey Commercial Solutions, many of these homeowners are now sleeping peacefully.

From O'Hare Airport in Chicago to Logan Airport in Boston to Tweed-New Haven Airport in Connecticut, Residential Sound Insulation Programs (RSIP) noise barrier activities have been taking place for a number of years. Many homes that have been determined eligible for noise abatement assistance based on their close location to an airport can gain relief from overhead airplane sounds from programs aiming to insulate homes from intrusive noises.

The goal is to create quieter residential environments that meet Federal Aviation Agency (FAA) noise reduction criteria mandated for Airport Improvement Program funded projects.

Acoustical Windows and RSIP

As far back as 1984, Harvey Classic vinyl acoustic windows have been specified in airport noise abatement projects. An RSIP project in Boston lasted from 1984 to 2011 and involved 9,500 houses. Another, in New Haven, started in 2014 and is scheduled to last until 2020. So far 180 properties have been identified for the program. The majority of the windows for designated homes in both Boston and New Haven have been supplied by Harvey Commercial Solutions.

To be specified for RSIP programs, acoustical windows must meet strict FAA mandated performance requirements and tight delivery schedules. In addition, it's critical that window manufacturers demonstrate a commitment to follow through on warranty issues if, and when they occur. Harvey acoustic windows meet all these requirements.

Feedback from homeowners in New Haven has shown that they value the options and solutions offered by the window manufacturer. At the same time, contractors appreciate having a product that meets the requirements of the sound insulation programs.

Success ... By the Numbers

During the past 20 years Harvey Classic vinyl acoustic window systems have been specified almost two dozen times as part of airport sound abatement projects across the country. Homes close to airports in cities such as Indianapolis, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Sarasota, Detroit and Cleveland have all had Harvey windows installed.

According to the O'Hare Noise Compatibility Commission, through September 2013 more than 10,000 residences in the Chicago area were sound insulated in the RSIP program --- and the program is anticipated to continue through 2020. Homes in an RSIP program are evaluated and eligible to receive new attic insulation; acoustically rated exterior doors, storm doors and windows; or air conditioning to make life easier for residents to live and sleep in their homes.

Noise pollution is a very real problem near airports," said Mark Gauvin, acoustical and commercial project manager for Harvey Commercial Solutions. "Harvey's acoustic windows help make homes quieter, and at the same time help homeowners save on heating and cooling costs. These windows are Energy Star qualified and independently tested to meet all sound abatement program performance issues."

Harvey Classic vinyl acoustic windows have achieved a Sound Transmission Class (STC) Rating of 44 for double hung, picture and rolling windows. Casement windows have a 40 STC rating. Available with different color, grid and glazing options, the acoustical windows fit the exact needs of RSIP.

"In the Chicago O'Hare and Midway airport areas we're sending two truckloads of acoustic windows a week for homes involved in RSIP," said Gauvin. "That's 600 windows per week. The design of these windows makes them especially valuable for sound situations."

Finding Solutions in New Haven

The Tweed-New Haven RSIP appears to be the benchmark for other airports. A survey of homes was conducted to identify four zones around the airport with significant noise exposure. Acoustical testing was then performed to determine eligibility of those homes for sound treatments. After that, the third phase occurs with a multitude of homes evaluated for window, door, insulation and ventilation treatments due to excessive sound.

"These professional studies look at all potential current and future homes impacted by noise from the airport in New Haven," said Gauvin. "As architects involved in the program move into the 'solutions stage' it's critical that they specify products that meet the standards set forth by the FAA for their acoustic programs.

"Harvey acoustical windows have a long history of meeting the requirements and expectations of the FAA, associated regulatory agencies and participating communities. Thanks to our dedicated efforts at Harvey Commercial Solutions to manufacture acoustic windows that meet the high standards for these programs, we expect to be involved in many more RSIP projects in the future.