

NOISE

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION TO INSURE A SOUND-CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENT
"America's Community Voice on Aviation Noise Issues" • An Affiliate of the National League of Cities

WASHINGTON NOISE WATCH November 15, 2005

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2005 AVIATION NOISE CONFERENCE – A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

The 2005 Summer Conference, held July 19-21 in Eagan, Minnesota, was very successful and provided a wealth of current information on noise research and mitigation strategies. Several prominent noise policymakers and leading researchers gave presentations over two days, including: Carl Burleson, Director of Federal Aviation Administration Office of Environment & Energy; Mayor R.T. Rybak of Minneapolis, MN; Ian Waitz, Director of the FAA Center of Excellence on Aircraft Noise and Aviation Emissions Mitigation; Jeff Hamiel, Executive Director of Metropolitan Airports Commission, and many other representatives of the legal, engineering sectors. All presenters contributed to making this conference our best yet

The conference culminated with a lunch panel session consisting of engineers, developers, and municipal planners involved in the construction of commercial and residential projects in aviation noise impact areas. Participants included Steve Devich, the City Manager of Richfield, MN; Larry Lee, the Community Development Director for Bloomington, MN; Steve Orfield, President of Orfield Laboratories, a Minneapolis based acoustics research center; and Bartlett Baker of McGough Development. The panel session was followed by a tour of "Bloomington Central Station", a McGough housing development of twin 17-story towers currently being constructed near the southern end of the new runway at the Minneapolis / St. Paul International Airport. Other tours during the conference included the facilities at Orfield Laboratories and the Metropolitan Airports Commission's Aviation Noise and Satellite Programs office at the Minneapolis / St. Paul International Airport.

Other notable events from the conference the presentation to Eagan, MN of the Betty Ann Krahnke Community of the Year award in recognition of the city's education and research investments made to prepare the citizens of Eagan for the opening of the new runway in Minneapolis. The Louisville, KY, Regional Airport Authority received the Mary E. Griffin Airport Operator of the Year for the Authority's strong commitment to working with surrounding communities in mitigating the effects of aircraft noise on residents living near the Airport.

NOISE received a warm welcome in Minnesota, with the cities of Eagan, Minneapolis, Bloomington and Richfield acting as hosts of the conference and many city officials from areas near the airport in attendance. Minnesota companies were also very supportive, with the Metropolitan Airports Commission, the Minneapolis office of HDR, Inc, and Orfield Laboratories participating as sponsors. The Denver-based law firm of Kaplan Kirsch, a frequent NOISE conference participant and presenter, also sponsored this year's event.

The next NOISE meeting will be the annual Winter Breakfast Meeting at the National League of Cities, Congress of Cities Exposition – being held this year in Charlotte, NC at 7:30 a.m. on December 9th. Please mark your calendars and RSVP to Brian at (202) 544-9844 or e-mail contact@aviation-noise.org if you plan to attend.



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AVIATION NOISE IN THE NEWS

L.A. City Council Approves Van Nuys Airport Plan

The L.A. City Council approved the Van Nuys Airport (VNY) Master Plan on September 9, 2005, detailing long-term planning that will guide land use on land owned by the airport over the next twenty years.

The plan is a compromise between homeowner associations forced to deal with noise around the airport and others looking to develop the city and its economic infrastructure. Both parties concluded that this plan allows for noise mitigation by putting into place a curfew on helicopters and limiting the use of stage 2 jets. Of the 730 acres at the airport, 480 are being set aside for development with the expectation that this use will generate revenue.

The plan was approved 12-0 by the council on September 13, 2005, but requires final approval by Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. He has indicated he will approve the plan and airport officials estimate that the review process will be completed by year's end.

Court Rules in City of Naples Airport Authority v. FAA

In June 2005, the U.S. Court of Appeals ruled in favor of Naples (FL) Airport Authority, which had instituted a ban on all Stage 2 aircraft. The National Business Aviation Association argued that the ban was unconstitutional and brought a lawsuit to prevent its enforcement. Naples argued that its status as a small vacation and retirement town provided sufficient reason to ban stage 2 aircraft. Naples conducted a study of noise in the affected area and found that while 65 DNL is suggested by the FAA, the community needed to maintain 60 DNL to keep the atmosphere of a retirement homes and vacation spot that its residents expect.

The FAA argued that they had the authority to regulate airports and prevent them from banning Stage 2 aircraft. This argument was overall found to be valid by the court, and will allow the FAA to continue regulations of this type unless the city can provide adequate reasons for additional restrictions. Naples won the case by demonstrating adequate reasons for maintaining the ban. This is an unusual circumstance that allows communities to regulate air traffic at their airports.

O'Hare Renovation Plan Runs into Opposition

A \$15 billion expansion of O'Hare International Airport was approved by the FAA in late September, but work was immediately stopped by a lawsuit from a cemetery and two Chicago suburbs. The 440-acre expansion would require the city of Chicago to purchase and raze 2,600 homes and 200 businesses and relocate 1,300 tombs in a churchyard cemetery. Preparation for construction has since resumed, but a separate ruling has temporarily prevented the City from negotiating with home and land owners for the sale of their property. A ruling on some issues involved in the lawsuit is expected in mid-November.



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Schools Surrounding O'Hare get \$12.5 Million for noise Mitigation

O'Hare Airport area schools will receive \$12.5 million this year for noise mitigation. The O'Hare Noise Compatibility Commission (ONCC) will spearhead the project, with \$10 million in funding from the FAA and the city of Chicago will contribute \$2.5 million with a disbursement from passenger facility charges charged to each departing passenger.

Nine schools will be involved in the noise mitigation program in 2006 with four schools receiving noise insulation procedures, and five receiving design feature changes. The O'Hare School Sound Insulation Program is the largest project of this type in the world, with more than a dozen school districts involved and 96 schools already insulated. Nine schools are scheduled for insulation work in 2006, with work in ten additional schools set for future dates.

Airport Noise Affects Children's Learning

A study has shown that children are adversely affected by airport noise. This has caused Lynnwood, Washington City Council to consider if an expansion of operations is in the best interest of the community.

The two areas negatively most affected by exposure to noise are reading comprehension and math. Reading comprehension rates go down as children are exposed to louder airport noise. This information has becoming increasingly political because it is being used to make policy decisions. At the heart of these decisions are if commercial flights should become a part of Snohomish County's Paine Field Airport.

In the study students were tested on their puzzle solving skills and could more quickly solve the puzzle. Also, noise studies have found that children who are unable to associate their actions with the outcomes may be more likely to develop learned helplessness as a result of the noise affecting their learning abilities. Memory and Attention will also negatively impacted by the noise levels found in the study.

Northwest Bankruptcy has Repercussions on City's Lawsuit

Minneapolis, Eagan, and Richfield Minnesota, three suburbs expected to be most affected by the opening of the new runway at the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport. The city of Bloomington has filed a separate lawsuit stemming from concerns regarding the Metropolitan Airports Commissions (MAC) noise mitigation plan.

Northwest Airlines successfully petitioned in May to join the Minneapolis / Eagan / Richfield lawsuit on the side of the MAC. Northwest's subsequent bankruptcy may delay consideration of the noise suit to allow bankruptcy proceedings to conclude. Both sides of the lawsuit have filed briefs with the presiding judge regarding the continuation or suspension of the case.



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Noise Technology Research Programs Producing Results

Despite Administration proposals to eliminate the program, the NASA Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate was funded at \$906.2 million for fiscal year 2006. NASA has long been the world leader in aeronautics research and these funds are critical to the development of new technologies to improve the efficiency, safety and environmental impact of air travel. Many technologies are currently under development that will benefit from the experience and resources available to NASA scientists.

Supersonic travel by civilian aviation has been restricted by federal law since 1973, but new advancements in technology have led to projections that supersonic passenger travel could be in use in less than ten years. A technology known as sonic boom shaping makes modifications to aircraft design to better distribute the air pressure build-up in front of a supersonic plane. This modifies how pressure is released in a sonic boom shockwave as the aircraft breaks the sound barrier, resulting in softer sonic booms. The Center of Excellence for Aircraft Noise and Aviation Emissions Mitigation Partnership for AiR Transportation Noise and Emissions Reduction (PARTNER) Supersonic Transport / Sonic Boom Mitigation project is continuing to examine technological approaches to lessening sonic shockwaves to a point acceptable for use in the commercial passenger industry.

In early October, Japanese researchers tested a prototype of a supersonic passenger aircraft in Australia. Once completed, the passenger jet could potentially fly at twice the speed of sound and carry 300 passengers from Tokyo to Los Angeles in about four hours. The sonic boom generated by the current design of the aircraft would prevent it from operating over the continental United States but boom shaping could make this prototype viable for trans-continental travel. The aircraft could be ready for commercial operation within 15 years.

Other technologies are being adapted to lessen the noise generated by currently used commercial aircraft. American Airlines has begun to implement Blended Winglet technology into their fleet. This technology, a variation of a concept developed by NASA, includes 8 foot expansions off the wingtips that have proven to significantly reduce fuel consumption, improve payload and range capability, lower aircraft noise and emissions, and dramatically improve takeoff performance from difficult airports.

PARTNER, NASA, and other stakeholder are developing several other technologies to reduce aircraft noise, including fan blade shaping and chevron-shaped exhaust nozzles which change the shape and frequency of shock waves to make them less noticeable by humans, and advance auto-throttle systems in which computers adjust throttle to precisely match takeoff profiles proven to be quieter and more efficient than manual control.