

## **New Airport Tractor and Rotary Cutter**

Hammond Northshore Regional Airport has a critical need for a new tractor and rotary cutter to maintain airport grass heights as required by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Louisiana Department of Transportation (LaDOTD) for aircraft operational safety.

- FAA and LaDOTD specify that airport grass areas be maintained at a height between 7 - 14 inches
  - o Provides a (relatively) safe surface for aircraft that depart paved surfaces or have to land off of paved surfaces
  - o Discourages wildlife, which pose a severe hazard to aircraft operations
    - Prevents grass from “seeding”, which attracts birds that can strike aircraft and be ingested by engines
    - Taller grass provides cover for young deer (fawns) and attracts predators; large animals that present a severe hazard to aircraft at high speed
- Hammond Airport employees must maintain over 920 acres of vegetation, mostly grass, year-round
  - o Working with two tractor/cutter units and two zero-turn mowers, one complete cycle of cutting requires 19 business days (one day short of 4 full weeks)
    - Assumes 8 hours/day, 5 days/week
    - Limiting factors: assumes no (zero) rain, no equipment breakage, and no days off (sick or vacation) for workers
  - o One of the two airport tractors is non-operational and deemed unrepairable
    - Unit is approximately 20 years old
    - \$34,427.62 in repairs over the past three years
    - Additional wear and tear on other tractor and two zero-turn mowers is not sustainable, long term
  - o Hay harvesting is not an acceptable option in most areas “inside the fence” of the airport
    - Harvesting height exceeds 7-14 inch requirement
    - Requires non-airport personnel to operate in Runway Safety Areas (RSA) and interact with aircraft and Air Traffic Control Tower
- FAA has approved Hammond Airport’s purchase of one new John Deere Tractor and Rotary Cutter using recently acquired FAA Cares Act Grant funds
  - o Of the \$157,000 total grant funds, will use \$61,597.14 to buy the tractor/cutter
  - o The grant funds were going to be used for significant electrical upgrades to the runway and taxiway light systems, as well as repainting of taxiway markings and portions of the runway; but these will have to be deferred given the tractor’s priority and the need for airfield safety
- Total cost of required John Deere equipment from Hammond vendor (within city limits) on State purchase contract: \$131,597.14
  - o Will use the remaining \$70,000 in the capital requests appropriation
  - o Will use \$61,597.14 in grant funds