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Gateway Airport receives \$8.9 million from FAA through Military Airport Program

Funds to be used for expansion of new terminal

MESA, AZ – Mesa Mayor Scott Smith and Queen Creek Mayor Art Sanders who also serves as the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport Authority Board Chair announced today that Congressman Harry Mitchell's office notified them last week that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has awarded the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport \$8.9 million as part of the 2009 Military Airport Program (MAP), which uses federal funds to convert former military airports to civilian or joint-use airports.

"We knew that Gateway was going to receive MAP funds earlier in the year." Congressman Harry Mitchell said. "I am very pleased that we were able to secure nearly \$9 million for this critical project. Gateway continues to have a significant economic impact on our region, and this funding will allow the airport to expand its terminal to aid in those efforts."

"Gateway supports more than 4,500 jobs in its service area with an annual economic impact of \$534 million." Mesa Mayor Scott Smith said. "This airport plays a significant role in tourism and aerospace representing two of the critical focus areas for economic development for the City. We appreciate Congressman Mitchell's support for the airport."

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Gateway will receive funds for an additional three years to complete terminal area projects designed to meet the needs due to the rapid growth of the airport, which is the third busiest airport in Arizona, and the busiest contract tower airport in the country.

“Congressman Mitchell has been a strong advocate for Gateway.” said Queen Creek Mayor and Board Chair Art Sanders. “He has fought to secure funding for the airport over last few years including \$1.75 million in 2008 and another \$950,000 in 2009. These funds helped support runway expansion and improvement projects. It is significant that these funds are coming to us from the FAA as discretionary and not earmark funding. The importance of this airport is recognized nationally.”

Gateway joins 11 other airports participating in this year’s program. MAP grants are awarded to current or former military airfields to assist in converting them to civil use and to reduce congestion at existing airports experiencing significant delays. MAP provides financial assistance to the civilian sponsors who are converting, or have already converted, military airfields to civilian or joint military/civilian use.

“This is fantastic news.” Mesa Councilmember Scott Somers said. “With Allegiant Air’s expanding passenger service, we need to move quickly to expand our capacity at this airport. This expansion will also support the growing aerospace industry in the region including international businesses such as Embraer.” The Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport is located in Councilmember Somers district.

The announcement was made this morning at a news conference held at the airport authority’s board room and attended by representatives from Congressman Harry Mitchell’s office, the FAA Western Region office, numerous elected officials including Gilbert Mayor John Lewis, State Representative Lauren Hendrix, and representatives from several state agencies as well as various city and airport staff members.