



News Release

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NEW VISUAL PAGING SYSTEM AT MIDWAY ELEVATES COMMUNICATION FOR TRAVELERS

New system aims to enhance travel experience for passengers with hearing disabilities

CHICAGO - The Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA) has launched a new visual paging system at Midway International Airport to enhance communications for deaf and hard of hearing passengers. The system displays text messages on Flight Information Display System (FIDS) monitors throughout the terminal to help connect passengers with family or friends, provide visual customer service messages, and when necessary, emergency notifications.

"The CDA is constantly exploring new technology and amenities to enhance our customer service and assistance for each and every traveler at Chicago's airports," said CDA Commissioner Rosemarie S. Andolino. "This new Visual Paging System aligns with Mayor Rahm Emanuel's vision to make Chicago the most accessible city in the nation. "

The service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If a family member or friend needs to reach a deaf or hard of hearing passenger, the complimentary visual paging service is available by calling (773) 838-9660 or (773) 838-9661 (TTY). The message can be displayed on as many as 24 FIDS monitors located throughout the terminal. The CDA worked with the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) to develop this new technology and provide staff training.

"This system represents our ongoing commitment to make Chicago's airports and the traveling experience more accessible to people with all types of disabilities," said Commissioner Karen Tamley, Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities.

The visual paging system is the latest of several initiatives undertaken by the CDA to enhance the travel experience for passengers with disabilities at Chicago's airports. In April 2010, the CDA introduced a new disability awareness and assistance program at O'Hare and Midway International Airports. Through the program, airport employees are trained to effectively recognize and help travelers who may require additional assistance.

As part of the program, the CDA developed a purple airplane icon to symbolize the program. The "Purple Airplane" symbol designates travelers who need additional assistance as well as staff and security personnel at Chicago's Airports. The "Purple Airplane" artwork is available for download from www.flychicago.com. Travelers can print stickers on readily available labels prior to arriving at the airport. Airport employees who have completed the training program wear purple airplane pins.

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The CDA has also developed informational materials to inform travelers with disabilities about the resources available to them at O'Hare and Midway International airports. The brochures include a map highlighting accessibility throughout the airports and are available at both airports and online.

Over the years, the CDA and MOPD have worked collaboratively to provide the best possible customer experience for travelers with disabilities. An airport-specific training program is now in place to educate CDA and key airport staff about how to recognize and address the needs of customers with disabilities. More than 400 front-line airport employees from the areas of terminal management, security, concessions, ground transportation traffic management and Traveler's Aid have received the training and wear a purple airplane pin signifying their willingness and ability to assist travelers with disabilities.

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The Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA) is self-supporting, using no local or state tax dollars for operations or capital improvements at O'Hare and Midway International airports. Together, Chicago's airports generate more than \$45 billion in annual economic activity and create 540,000 jobs for the region. Please visit [www.flychicago.com](http://www.flychicago.com) to learn more about the Chicago Department of Aviation.

The O'Hare Modernization Program (OMP) transforms O'Hare's airfield from an outdated system of intersecting runways into a modern parallel runway configuration. The program will reduce overall delays at the Airport by 79 percent, and bad weather delays by 95 percent. It will create 195,000 new jobs and \$18 billion in additional economic activity each year. Please visit [www.oharemodernization.org](http://www.oharemodernization.org) to learn more about the OMP.

The CDA continues to incorporate and expand sustainability initiatives for airport planning, design, construction, operations and maintenance, and concessions and tenants at O'Hare and Midway International Airports in accordance with the CDA Sustainable Airport Manual (SAM) Version 2.0, released in November 2010. To review case studies, key findings and new technologies, and to learn more about the upcoming Airports Going Green Conference in Chicago October 31 - November 2, 2011, please visit [www.airportsgoinggreen.org](http://www.airportsgoinggreen.org).

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Editor's note: Photos attached. Higher resolution photos available upon request.

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Photo Caption 1: Text messages displayed on Flight Information Display System (FIDS) monitors throughout the terminal at Midway International Airport help connect passengers with family or friends, provide visual customer service messages, and when necessary, provide emergency notifications.

Photo Credit: Chicago Department of Aviation



Photo Caption 2: Text messages displayed on Flight Information Display System (FIDS) monitors throughout the terminal at Midway International Airport help connect passengers with family or friends, provide visual customer service messages, and when necessary, provide emergency notifications.

Photo Credit: Chicago Department of Aviation