

Gov. Pritzker Celebrates Improvements To St. Louis Downtown Airport In Cahokia Heights And Sauget

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ST. CLAIR COUNTY – Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) were joined Thursday, April 6, by local officials and community leaders to celebrate a \$5.4 million investment in several airfield improvements at the St. Louis Downtown Airport that improve safety, reliability, and efficiency while boosting

airport business and global competitiveness. The improvements are made possible by the Governor's historic, bipartisan Rebuild Illinois capital program that's fueling record levels of investment in the state's airports and projects throughout the Metro East.

"I'm proud to announce that construction is well underway on a brand-new engine run-up ramp equipped with taxiway access, including a noise mitigation barrier and compass calibration pad," said Governor JB Pritzker. "These facilities will not only improve cost effectiveness, but they will also enhance St. Louis Downtown Airport's capacity to serve passengers from Illinois and across the globe."

The airport improvements are highlighted by a ground run-up and compass calibration pad that include new airfield pavement with jet blast deflectors. The addition will accommodate more than 500 yearly aircraft maintenance tests that require the operation of engines at high power on the ground for several minutes. The engine run-up will be isolated from airfield operations, reducing noise levels by more than 50% and accommodating the airport's largest aircraft.

The project is funded through a \$5 million Rebuild Illinois grant, with a local contribution of \$400,000. Construction started last year and is expected to wrap up in June.

"This project will help maintain and attract more high-tech aerospace manufacturing jobs to our area," said State Representative Kevin Schmidt (R-Millstadt). "I thank Governor Pritzker for securing the funds to make the Ground Engine Run-Up project possible. This investment will create new opportunities for our region and help grow the local economy."

"Continued investment in this airport is good for local jobs and for economic growth in our region," said State Representative Jay Hoffman (D-Belleville). "This project underscores the value of strong capital development and of the opportunities we can unlock. I am appreciative of the work that happened behind the scenes to make today a reality."

"With St. Louis Downtown Airport being one of the busiest airports outside of Chicago, the need for projects to keep up with demand is essential," said State Senator Christopher Belt (D-Swansea). "As downstate Illinois expands, we have to continue investing in its infrastructure. These projects will improve production safety, reliability and efficiency, which will be vital for Metro East residents for years to come."

"Aviation is a vital part of our state's economy and the multimodal system that makes us the transportation hub of North America. St. Louis Downtown Airport is a key part of that system, one we're proud to invest in," said Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer

Osman. “Through Rebuild Illinois, we’re delivering transformational projects just like this one across all modes of transportation in every region of our state, improving local quality of life and creating economic opportunity.”

Located in St. Clair County, St. Louis Downtown Airport is one of the busiest general aviation airports in Illinois outside of the Chicago area. The airport is a significant driver of local and state economies, contributing more than \$422 million in economic impact for the region annually, including more than 1,500 jobs. The airport supports recreational and business flying as well as flight instruction. It is home to several aircraft and helicopter maintenance organizations including Gulfstream Aerospace Corp., one of the largest aviation maintenance and repair organizations in the country.

Through Rebuild Illinois, IDOT is investing a total of \$150 million in aviation. In 2021, Gov. Pritzker committed \$94 million to airports throughout the state, unlocking \$11.5 million in local contributions for a combined investment of \$105 million. The funding was the largest statewide capital investment for airports in state history.

Passed in 2019, Rebuild Illinois is investing a total \$33.2 billion into the state's transportation system over six years, creating jobs and promoting economic growth. Rebuild Illinois is not only the largest capital program in state history, but also the first plan that touches all modes of Illinois transportation: roads and bridges, transit, waterways, freight and passenger rail, aviation, and bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.

[Rebuild Illinois](#) is advancing several projects in the Metro East, including \$163 million to relocate Illinois 3 from Riverpark Drive in East St. Louis to Monsanto Avenue in Sauget, \$6 million to resurface Illinois 157 from Illinois 3 to Louise Avenue in Cahokia, \$74.3 million to reconstruct Interstate 255 from Illinois 15 to Illinois 157, as well as the \$531 million effort with Missouri to build a new Interstate 270 bridge over the Mississippi River with other corridor improvements. Additionally, Rebuild Illinois is providing \$96 million for extending MetroLink from Scott Air Force Base to MidAmerica Airport.