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MassDOT, Volpe National Transportation Center Announce 1st in Nation “Carbon Neutral” Airport Project.

Nantucket Airport Chosen to Implement Energy Efficiency Plan

BOSTON-, May 13, 2013- The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Aeronautics Division and Volpe National Transportation Systems Center today announced a pilot program to create the first ever airport with “carbon neutral” ground operations in the United States. Nantucket Memorial Airport has been chosen to take all steps necessary to implement that designation.

“This truly revolutionary partnership to develop an airport with entirely carbon neutral operations is a shining example of our 'GreenDOT' plan to build a transportation system that is environmentally sustainable, and we look forward to working with the Nantucket Airport on this groundbreaking effort,” said MassDOT Secretary and CEO Richard Davey.

“Nantucket has a storied tradition as a community of seafarers, and its whaling fleet was once at the heart of the world’s energy and transportation economies,” said Nantucket Airport Manager Thomas Rafter. “The concept of sustainable transportation is something that makes sense on Nantucket, and is something I feel the community can really get behind and be proud to showcase.”

The Carbon Neutral Airport Pilot Program will assist the Nantucket Airport to implement measures that dramatically reduce fossil fuel consumption and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The program will identify lessons and practices learned to assist other general aviation and large commercial service airports.

MassDOT and Volpe, with the support of a Planning Advisory Group, chose the Nantucket Airport from among five Commonwealth general aviation airports that were eligible to receive Federal Aviation Administration sustainability/low emission funding to support the project. Planning Advisory Group members included the following: MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning; MassDOT Energy Committee; Federal Aviation Administration; Volpe National Transportation Systems Center; Massachusetts Port Authority; General Aviation Airports; Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs; Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act staff; Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources; and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

“This program demonstrates the tremendous partnerships going on across the public and private sectors to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the Commonwealth,” said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rick Sullivan. “Massachusetts continues to be a leader in the clean energy revolution and Nantucket Airport is the next innovative step toward a healthier, more sustainable Commonwealth.”

“I want to thank the Nantucket Airport leadership, Aeronautics Division staff, our partners at Volpe, and the Advisory Group for their work in developing this program and working toward implementation,” said MassDOT Aeronautics Division Administrator Christopher Willenborg. The program to achieve “carbon neutrality” will move forward in 2013 with data collection and inventory in Phase One, followed by implementation in Phase Two, with the following steps:

- Inventory of all greenhouse gases under the airport’s control;
- Implement carbon reduction goals through energy efficiency projects to reduce energy demand;
- Identify and reduce airport operations emissions such as transportation and refrigerant use;
- Generate renewable energy, with the goal of being equal to or greater than total consumed energy, leaving zero or net negative annual greenhouse gas emissions.

MassDOT and the Nantucket Airport plan to rigorously pursue energy efficiency in airport buildings, on the airfield and among fleet vehicles. Efficiency will likely involve major upgrades to retrofit mechanical equipment, lighting systems and other facilities. New automation systems and operational changes will achieve additional energy savings. On-site renewable energy will be generated with the goal of equaling or exceeding energy consumption that cannot be eliminated.

The Carbon Neutral project includes \$805,000 in MassDOT Aeronautics funding along with other expected local and federal funding sources.

The project supports the MassDOT “GreenDOT” sustainability implementation plan and the 2010 Massachusetts Statewide Airport System Plan, which includes six statewide system goals and more than 50 performance measures designed to help the Aeronautics Division monitor airport performance. Among the six goals the Carbon Neutral project supports is Environmental Compliance and Stewardship, requiring airports to pursue sustainability practices to protect the natural environment and quality of life for airport employees and neighbors, and promote the economic development potential of the airport.

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