
News Release

July 15, 2011

UPDATE ON GRAND JUNCTION REGIONAL AIRPORT FENCE PROJECT #2

Grand Junction, Colorado, July 15, 2011- There has been a lot of questions and comments surrounding the wildlife fence project. The Airport would like to provide some basic facts and information to help tenants sort through the rumors and the realities.

The wildlife fence project was the recommendation of the USDA through an FAA mandated and approved wildlife assessment, conducted by a qualified biologist. Wildlife strikes pose a significant danger to aircraft operations and while not called out specifically in the Recommendations section of the Assessment, it is recommended as standard practice that wildlife fencing be established where security fencing is not already in place. The FAA also feels that a wildlife fence is necessary for our airport and approved the funding for the project.

Wildlife fencing serves several purposes - it protects aircraft from wildlife strikes, it provides additional security and a visible security layer, and it protects the public from inadvertent access to the Air Operations Area.

The alignment of the fencing is an issue that is being addressed. The challenge is that the funding eligibility for the wildlife fence to replace the existing fence and access gates in their current configuration. The Airport Authority has established a committee to look at the concerns of the tenants and identify ways to mitigate any changes.

A letter from the TSA to Congressman Tipton's office has been circulated around the airport. To clarify the facts, the TSA did not require a wildlife fence, specifically. Contrary to popular opinion the role of the TSA is normally not to dictate specific security methods and procedures to airports - although they will do this from time to time. They set standards for security through their regulations. Since every airport is unique, the security regulations allow airports to design their own security programs and explain to the TSA how the airport will comply with the regulations through the Airport Security Program. The TSA then either approves or disapproves of the method or procedure. While the TSA letter states that the TSA did not mandate a security fence, it did approve of the fence as a means to control access to the Air Operations Area, and has rejected the current method being used to control access to GJT AOA.

Some have asked the valid question about why Grand Junction Regional Airport is taking certain actions, while other airports are not. The simple fact is that every airport is different and what's approved by the FAA or TSA for one airport, may not be at another.

Ultimately, any solution must meet the TSA regulations for access to the AOA, and be fundable. While some tenants have cited certain TSA regulations under Title 49 CFR Part 1542, that's not the complete story. Each airport operator has access to TSA documents that provides guidance and standards that must be met, with regards to developing methods and procedures for securing the airport. It is also a directive to airports that access points be reduced whenever possible. Airport operators must try to balance these regulatory requirements with minimizing impact on the tenants.

The Airport will continue to assess solutions to minimize impact to airport tenants and your commentary is welcome.

Grand Junction Regional Airport
2828 Walker Field Drive, Suite 301
Grand Junction, Colorado 81506

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Contact Information:
Jeffrey C. Price M.A., C.M.
303-386-3434 Office
303-912-0917 Cell

