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CONTACT:

Natalie Peterson, Duluth Airport Authority, Director of Communications & Marketing  
218-625-7768

## **DULUTH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**

### **Agreement reached to move forward with Runway 9/27 Reconstruction Project**

**Duluth, MN,** –Runway 9/27 at Duluth International Airport (DLH) is the longest and most heavily used runway at Duluth International Airport. The existing pavement is 60 years old and is in need of replacement according to two different pavement condition reports. The reconstruction plan initially proposed a two month runway closure in 2016 which posed a major problem for AAR, an aircraft maintenance facility located at the airport. AAR employs more than 300 people in Duluth and their primary client is dependent on the main runway for access in and out of the facility. While other airport tenants can use the shorter “crosswind” runway at Duluth, AAR’s client is unable to utilize this runway and a two month closure would have threatened the jobs and workload at AAR. A creative solution was required to meet AAR’s needs and keep the construction project, which is funded primarily by a grant from the Federal Aviation Administration, on track. Working closely with the selected construction contractor PCI Roads, the airport's engineering team was able to provide a creative solution to this concern. This solution allows for the reconstruction project to be broken into two phases, 1A and 1B. An agreement to this new two phase solution has been reached between the Duluth Airport Authority, airport stakeholders, and the construction contractor that will allow this critical 9/27 runway reconstruction project to proceed starting June 1, 2016. Completion of Phase 1A, which is approximately 20% of the total project, is scheduled for June 22, 2016, with Phase 1B scheduled for summer 2017. “I want to thank AAR, PCI and leaders at the City of Duluth for their collaboration with us in finding an amicable solution. All parties involved share the same commitment to maintaining strong infrastructure and preserving business vitality,” said Tom Werner, Executive Director of the Duluth Airport Authority.

This new construction schedule allows phase 1A to be done as planned while the 148<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing is deployed to Korea. The acceleration and dates are timed to coincide with AAR’s maintenance schedule. The remainder of the project (phase 1B) will be completed during a second closure of the runway next summer. The exact dates and timeframe of the 2017 work have yet to be finalized. This will allow communication and coordination to continue with all airport stakeholders to identify the best timing for phase 1B in 2017. “The aviation sector plays a critical role on this region’s economy. It was critical that we come up with the best solution possible for all parties that provided the least amount of operational impact but yet supported this critical infrastructure need. We appreciate the efforts of the airport stakeholders, contractors and local legislators for the commitment to this project,” said Dave Montgomery, Chief Administrative Officer with the City of Duluth.

“We appreciate the efforts of the City of Duluth/Duluth International Airport Authority, the construction contractor and our customer to come up with a creative solution that will keep AAR’s more than 300 aircraft mechanics working,” said Mark Ketterer, Vice President of Operations, AAR Aircraft Services, Duluth. “AAR remains committed to playing a vital role in the Duluth economy and community.”

Developing a final plan has involved and will continue to involve on-going discussions between the Airport Authority staff and Board, airport tenants, City of Duluth, Federal Aviation Administration officials, and key leaders from the local legislative delegation. Congressman Rick Nolan, who successfully advocated for project funding, played an instrumental

role in the successful resolution. “The big winner here is runway 9/27 at Duluth International Airport, and ultimately the citizens of Duluth and the surrounding region. Thanks to Tom Werner and all who participated in this epic effort to obtain a fresh 50 year life for this vital facility. The positive economic impact of their work will be long appreciated,” said Ken Stromquist, Duluth Airport Authority Board President.

**About Duluth International Airport**

The new state-of-the-art passenger terminal at the Duluth International Airport opened for business on January 14, 2013. Currently United Airlines offers three daily nonstop flights to Chicago and Delta offers five daily nonstop flights to Minneapolis/St. Paul. In 2013 the Duluth International Airport recorded the third busiest year in its history. Be sure to check out our new loyalty rewards program – Thanks Again. [www.thanksagain.com/DLH](http://www.thanksagain.com/DLH)

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