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Chinese delegation visits Gary/Chicago International Airport's Runway 12/30
Part of official educational tour on best practices in successful brownfield redevelopment projects throughout the United States

GARY (September 4, 2015) – On Friday morning, the Gary/Chicago International Airport hosted a seven-member Chinese delegation to tour the former brownfield site.

The delegation, representing three environmental consulting firms and three research centers in China, was in town for the National Brownfields Training Conference in Chicago. The conference included a 'Standards in Trade' workshop to introduce select Chinese experts to U.S. technology companies, scientific experts, and standards experts experienced in environmental remediation. The Chinese government has identified environmental remediation as a national objective, and this workshop will explore best practices in the United States.

'Brownfield' refers to land that was previously used for industrial purposes and may be contaminated with hazardous waste or pollution. Brownfields must be cleaned up before being returned to productive use. Due to rapid development and urbanization, China is facing a surplus of abandoned industrial sites that must be rehabilitated.

Global engineering firm AECOM, one of the main contractors on the airport's Runway Expansion Project, arranged for the delegation to tour the airport and experience one of the region's redeveloped brownfields first-hand.

"We completed an exhaustive, complex rehabilitation of the surrounding land in order to complete the runway expansion," said airport executive director Dan Vicari, who also served as project manager of the Runway Expansion Project. "The successful expansion garnered national attention and I am proud now to share Gary's best practices with an international audience."

The City of Gary and the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority have received numerous federal grants to fund the City's Brownfields Program, making Gary the perfect location to highlight the impact of redevelopment on abandoned or underutilized land. The Gary/Chicago International Airport is one of the program's big successes. The land that is now covered by the new runway extension was unused and heavily polluted from prior industrial use. After significant environmental remediation, that land was transformed into an asset for the airport and economic driver for the city.

The visit is part of multi-city tour which includes metropolitan areas in New York and California.

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