

## Work completed on Gateway taxiway

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March 14, 2009 - 8:20PM

Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport completed a \$7.4 million taxiway extension last week as part of a plan to improve traffic flow and safety, airport authorities said.

The extension to Taxiway Bravo, which runs parallel to a runway used most frequently by air carrier Allegiant Air, was extended by 2,500 feet, said airport spokesman Brian Sexton.

The length of the taxiway, completed Wednesday, was increased to about 7,500 feet, including additional drainage, airfield signs, and energy-efficient lighting, officials said.

Sexton said a big initiative was improving traffic flow and increasing safety by moving aircraft on and off the parallel airport runway.

"It makes the airport more efficient because the quicker they get off the runway the quicker the next plane can land," Sexton said, adding that the construction project lasted six months and provided on average 50 jobs a day.

Airport Executive Director Lynn Kusy said the extension furthers the airport's overall mission.

"This new taxiway extension offers air traffic controllers another tool for moving aircraft traffic on and off the runways and ramp areas," he said, adding that it would lead to "increased safety and less time on the ground for travelers."

Sexton said construction was funded with grants from the Federal Aviation Administration, Arizona Department of Transportation, and with grant matching funds from the airport authority.

He said a final phase will begin this spring, extending the total length to 9,800 feet. The actual runway is about 10,400 feet.

Sexton said the benefits would be passed on to customers, as well as tenants of the airport.

"It's a direct benefit to Allegiant and their passengers and makes the airport more efficient as a whole," he said.

Sabrina LoPiccolo of Allegiant Air said the taxiway extension follows several developments in her company's partnership with the airport, including a passenger terminal that opened in 2007 and an expansion of the terminal in 2008, which cost about \$3 million.

She said the taxiway extension was just another progressive step on the airport's part.

"I definitely see a benefit," LoPiccolo said.