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News Release

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Airport Sound Insulation Program Completed

--More than 2,400 homes received new acoustical windows, attic insulation and more

The Wayne County Airport Authority (WCAA) today celebrated the conclusion of its program to provide sound insulation treatment for more than 2,400 homes and seven schools in neighborhoods near Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport (DTW).

The Residential Sound Insulation Program (RSIP) is one element in a larger noise compatibility plan voluntarily initiated by DTW which included the installation of noise berms around the airport's perimeter, the acquisition of homes most impacted by airport related noise, modified air traffic control procedures, preferential runway use and aircraft engine ground run-up procedures.

"In just 14 years more than \$118 million has been pumped into the footprint surrounding the airport as of the beginning of this year," said WCAA CEO Lester Robinson. "The goal is noise reduction, but a side-benefit of residential sound insulation is home improvement and energy savings for residents. In many cases, improvements provided by the program stimulated community pride and homeowners began making other sorts of home and landscaping improvements, which continue to benefit entire neighborhoods today."

The majority of that money, nearly \$76 million, was spent sound insulating homes in Romulus, Huron Township, Taylor, Westland and Dearborn Heights. Residential sound insulation typically includes new acoustical windows, primary and secondary doors, attic insulation and other architectural treatments. In most homes, it also included new heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems, allowing homeowners to keep windows closed to block noise infiltration.

Seven schools in five communities were also sound insulated at a cost of \$5.4 million, and 265 homes most impacted by aircraft noise were acquired by the program at the appraised market value. Some residents opted for the airport's purchase assurance program which enabled homeowners to obtain fair market value at the time of the sale.

Noise measurements conducted by California-based Charles Salter Associates concluded

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that DTW's RSIP treatments successfully reduced interior noise levels. On average, homes achieved a 7.7Db reduction, 2.7Db better than the FAA minimum, and 29% of the homes tested achieved a greater than 10Db reduction in noise. Homeowners reported a 90% reduction in frequent noise-related disturbances and 99% of homeowners would recommend the program to others.

The Residential Sound Insulation Program, which began in 1997, was one recommendation in a broader Noise Compatibility Plan, developed when DTW completed a Federal Aviation Regulation Part 150 Noise Study in 1993. Participation in the federal Part 150 program is voluntary on the part of the airport. An airport which participates is eligible to receive up to 80% federal funding and must follow the guidelines established by Congress. Progress in the program has been monitored by the Federal Aviation Administration which administered all federal funding. More than 20 contracting firms participated in the sound insulation program. For the past five years, the prime consultant on the program has been C&S Engineers, which established a local office in New Boston, MI.

The official noise exposure map for Detroit Metropolitan Airport is currently being updated and new data indicates that the noise contours surrounding DTW are shrinking. This is due to the accelerated addition of more fuel-efficient (and quieter) aircraft by the airlines, more reliance on smaller and quieter regional jets, and the phasing out of noisier stage II aircraft by December 31, 1999.

However, with the approval of the FAA, all eligible homes within both the old and the new noise exposure contours have been addressed by the program.

The contract for sound insulating the last 43 homes is scheduled for consideration at the September 28 WCAA Board Meeting, which means the final sound insulation activity should conclude before Thanksgiving. The Airport Authority is no longer accepting applications for sound insulation. Extensive outreach to homeowners was conducted throughout the program including direct mailings, telephone calls, knocking on doors, group meetings, media outreach, newsletters and communications with homeowner associations, property management companies and realtors. Finally, follow-up contacts were made with homeowners, who initially declined to participate, to ensure they had additional opportunities before the deadline.

"I would like to express my appreciation to Wayne County Commissioner Edward Boike who is also a member of the Airport Authority Board," said Mr. Robinson. "He remained actively engaged, throughout this entire process and never failed to represent the best interests of his constituents."

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