

Published: May 15, 2007

Business: Transportation

IDOT chooses Rockford Primary Airport of Year

ROCKFORD REGISTER STAR

ROCKFORD — Chicago/Rockford International Airport has been named the state's "Primary Airport of the Year" by the Illinois Department of Transportation's aeronautics division.

"The selection of your airport for this award was based, in part, on recent improvements to air passenger and air cargo facilities, good maintenance of the facility, preservation and enhancement of airfield safety, and good community relations," wrote Susan Shea, director of the aeronautics division.

The state has 12 "primary airports," according to the most recent Federal Aviation Airport data available. A primary airport has at least 10,000 passenger boardings a year. Marion/Williamson County won last year and Peoria won in 2005.

Airport Executive Director Bob O'Brien said the award is another sign that state officials are taking notice of the airport's growth. He credited the Greater Airport Authority board and the airport staff and said their work led to the award.

"It continues to raise the visibility of RFD on the statewide program for grants and so forth, and it also increases the visibility with the regional FAA folks," he said. "It won't be bad reading for any of the airlines we're talking to or any of the developers we're talking to. ... How well the airport is managed really dictates how affordable it will be for them and how stable it would be for them."