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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ELIZABETH HANFORD DOLE
GREATER KANKAKEE AIRPORT RUNWAY DEDICATION
KANKAKEE, ILLINOIS
DECEMBER 11, 1986

How pleased I am to be in Kankakee -- home of the Triple A State High School Football Champions (Bishop McNamara High School) -- heart of the I-57 High Tech Corridor.

I'm delighted to dedicate this important runway extension --a monument to the future. The 885-foot extension plus the new automated flight service station to be located here will enhance your economic development plans. Although the Federal Aviation Administration put \$3.5 million dollars into the extension and other improvements, the project is a tribute to your ingenuity, your foresight and your determination. I congratulate you on making this airport a centerpiece of your economic growth movement designed to bring Kankakee back from its low ebb a couple of years ago when you lost two major industries. Your priorities are well chosen. But then I don't have to tell any resident of Kankakee, a city founded as a hub of the Illinois Central Railroad, that transportation is critical to economic growth. And this runway extension completes an important transportation link. Community-wide enthusiasm for the airport and the flight service station --as evidenced by the enthusiasm here today -- is a model for the nation and certainly an inspiration to me as I try to make a difference -- a positive difference for people.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, this is a very futuristic occasion, filled with hope and confidence, and I share that spirit. In the not-too-distant future, I see this airport in a position to take advantage of opportunities provided by airline deregulation, and certainly deregulation proves there is no limit to the genius of the American entrepreneur. For under deregulation, entrepreneurs launched a new era in aviation. In 1978 prior to deregulation our choice was limited to first class or coach. Today, you can find as many as 10 categories of fares, each tailored to a specific market segment. Today there are eleven major carriers flying, another score or so of medium-sized carriers and a host of regional and commuter airlines.

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It has clearly brought a new level of cost consciousness and service options to the airline industry.

Air service to Chicago is up 32 percent since 1978 and seat capacity has increased 37 percent.

And at the Department of Transportation, we are determined that while deregulation increases profits, and choices for the traveling public, safety will in no way be diminished. Each day, some 15 thousand scheduled airline flights carry an average of one million passengers, and 99.999 percent of these flights reach their destinations without so much as a minor operational error. And let me emphasize this point: when we speak of "airline deregulation," we are talking about the elimination of economic regulation. Safety has most assuredly not been deregulated.

There have been plenty of headlines about air safety in the media this year, but let me shed some light on the subject. Despite widely publicized crashes last year, the total accident rate for U.S. carriers operating scheduled service in 1985 ranked among the lowest of the past decade. In fact, the domestic fatality rate for these carriers in the seven years since deregulation is only about half that of the five years immediately preceding deregulation. And commuter airlines, which have flourished under deregulation, had the lowest accident rate in their history last year.

The benefits of economic deregulation both to the traveler and the American economy as a whole simply cannot be exaggerated. They are real, substantial and ongoing, and they are measured in billions of dollars in reduced travel costs.

For example, a recent report by the Brookings Institute showed deregulation has generated \$2.5 billion in annual airline earnings that would not have been possible under regulation and has provided six billion dollars in annual net benefits to the nation's travellers since 1977.

Now, I am not claiming that the post-1978 era has been problem-free. It is inevitable that in the transition from a stagnant, regulated industry to a booming competitive one, there will be some growing pains. Additionally, the PATCO strike, right in the middle of our transition to a free market, compounded these pains by requiring restrictions on air traffic while the controller work force was being rebuilt. Finally, the FAA, which had geared itself to the lethargic pace of an industry in which economic change was inhibited at every turn by the CAB. Thus, in recent years, the FAA has faced the challenge to keep a step ahead of a newly invigorated competitive industry.

But we are determined, as I said, not to allow safety to be cut short in any way. We are increasing the size of the controller work force by 1,000 to accommodate future growth in the aviation system.

To improve safety and productivity, we designed and implemented a variety of new and better air traffic control procedures. The FAA's "flow control" system balances air traffic with the capacity of the system. Each morning, FAA's manager for traffic flow has a meeting by conference call with the 22 major air traffic control centers around the country. The key word is "anticipate;" this daily call enables the centers to anticipate air traffic needs more efficiently. When a plane takes off in New York, the pilot already knows what his landing slot will be when he arrives in Los Angeles. We have dramatically reduced the number of planes circling over busy airports. The results are fewer delays, except where weather is a factor, substantial fuel savings, and a more efficient use of our controller workforce.

In order to double capacity in the air and bring on stream new safety initiatives, we have launched a program to completely modernize the National Airspace System, providing technology to lead us into the 21st century. We will spend \$12.2 billion -- paid for by users of air services -- and save more than \$63 billion over the life cycle of the equipment we are purchasing. Implementation of this plan will mean increased safety, productivity and economy as a result of moving to the highest levels of automation. For example, the Microwave Landing System is three times more accurate than the the Instrument Landing System.

We have also been more than willing to constantly reexamine ourselves to ensure that we are operating under the highest safety procedure and staying on top of the growth in aviation.

To be sure that safety inspectors are doing the best possible job, I ordered four major efforts which have led to dramatic changes in the way inspections are conducted. First, two years ago, we undertook an unprecedented, comprehensive "White Glove" inspection of all U.S. airlines -- 14,000 additional inspections. I also ordered a top-to-bottom review by our inspectors of General Aviation, including air taxis, repair and maintenance shops, pilot training programs and recordkeeping. Overall, we found a high level of compliance with our standards -- but we discovered problems with some carriers, and we took corrective action immediately.

As some of you may know, authorization of our nation's Federal aviation programs expires October 1 and I will submit a reauthorization proposal to Congress early next year. Our proposal will ensure the safety of today's airport and airway system and will provide the resources necessary so the system can grow to meet the aviation needs of the future.

Our challenges in the years? To keep the momentum of progress and safety running in tandem. We have the safest, most efficient transportation system in the world. With your help and support, we will continue to lead the rest of the world. America deserves it. History demands it. Our children will reward it.

And now it is my privilege to dedicate this new runway. May it serve many generations of Kankakee residents as well as those who pass through your truly remarkable city.

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