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NEW SURFACE 'FRICTION TESTER' HELPS KEEP RUNWAYS SAFE AT MKE *Special vehicle determines how slick runways are after heavy rainfall*

MILWAUKEE (August 25, 2022) – Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport has a newly-implemented vehicle designed to keep runways even safer. The continuous friction measuring vehicle is used to measure the rate of slippage and loss of friction on the runway surface due to rubber buildup or pavement wear.

Airplane wheels can leave behind a rubber residue which could cause runways to become slippery. MKE uses the friction testing vehicle to measure the co-efficiency of friction on the pavement surface. This is done through a series of pipes installed in the vehicle which sprays water in front of a fifth wheel or a “test wheel” to simulate wet pavement.

The vehicle’s water tank can carry enough water for 22,000 feet of testing. It then drives the length of the runway and uses a precise system to take readings every several hundred feet. The Airport will then address any issues noted in the readings with a water-blasting system which will remove the rubber deposits noted on the runways.



“This is just one more example of how MKE maintains its facility with safety in mind at all times,” said Airport Director Brain Dranzik. “After completing our biggest surface rehabilitation project in 40 years just last year – this allows us to easily stay on top of the planning and maintenance of our runways. During these wet summer months, this particular machine helps us keep our runways open for fast, safe, and efficient travel.”

After periods of heavy rainfall, the surface friction tester vehicle is also used to determine if any ponding has occurred on the runway. Otherwise, the vehicle is used every two weeks to monitor for any trends and stay on top of routine runway maintenance during the summer and winter months.

Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport offers nonstop flights to 35+ destinations coast-to-coast, and more than 200 international destinations are available with one easy connection. MKE is served by Air Canada, Alaska, American, Delta, Frontier, JetBlue, Southwest, Spirit, Sun Country, and United. The complete list of nonstop cities can be found at flymke.com.

MKE, the winner of a 2021 ASQ Best Airport – North America award for outstanding customer experience, is owned by Milwaukee County and operated by the Department of Transportation,

Airport Division, under the policy direction of the Milwaukee County Executive and the County Board of Supervisors. The Airport is entirely funded by user fees; no property tax dollars are used for the Airport's capital improvements or for its day-to-day operation.

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