



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Dave Wellman
Communications Manager
219-644-3506
dwellman@rda.in.gov

RDA Board Gives Green Light to Porter County Airport Grant

*Board also accepts grant request from East Chicago and approves
funding for Regional Cities plan.*

Crown Point, IN (August 20, 2015) – The Board of Directors of the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority today approved a \$317,197 grant to the Porter County Regional Municipal Airport that will provide matching funds for \$12.6 million in runway and equipment improvements.

The Board’s approval is contingent upon Porter County authorizing a like amount as part of a package of local and state matching funds. The \$317,197 each from the RDA and Porter County would be combined with \$634,394 in state funding to provide a 10% local match to access \$11.4 million in federal funds.

The total \$12.6 million from this combination would be used for rehabilitation and reconstruction on runway 9-27, which is in danger of falling below minimum service levels, and to complete a High Intensity Runway Lighting Rehabilitation project which would replace lighting components that are beyond their service lifetime.

“Just like the airport in Gary, the Porter County airport is a significant driver of regional economic activity,” said RDA President and CEO Bill Hanna. “A 2012 estimate put its economic impact at more than \$17 million annually. This grant is a small but vital piece to access federal funding for urgently needed repairs and upgrades.”

PORTER COUNTY AIRPORT ADD 1

The Board also accepted for review a request from East Chicago for \$12.935 million for Phase II of its Waterfront Revitalization Initiative. This grant would be used for lakefront and marina district construction; reconstruction of ground routes to and from the harbor; and bridge, ramp and intersection improvements. Other actions taken today by the RDA Board include:

- Approval of a contract not to exceed \$53,000 for SEH for professional services relating to the preparation of the RDA's Regional Cities application to the Indiana Economic Development Corporation. The RDA is seeking \$42 million from the Regional Cities fund as a local match to federal dollars that would allow NICTD to fully double-track the South Shore commuter rail line from Gary to Michigan City. This inclusive, collaborative proposal will benefit four counties – Lake, Porter, La Porte and St. Joseph – with a combined population of more than 1 million by encouraging private investment in transit-oriented development, attracting new residents and businesses, creating new jobs in Indiana and offering increased access to high-paying careers in Chicago.

Fully double-tracking the existing South Shore line from Gary to Michigan City will reduce transit times to and from Chicago, enable the South Shore to offer increased service, and improve on-time performance and customer satisfaction. Quick, reliable and frequent access to the third-largest metro economy in the country will directly answer the Regional Cities challenge for plans that create jobs, encourage economic development and improve quality of place.

- Approval of a contract not to exceed \$18,500 for Organizational Development Solutions for additional grantee training, communication and compliance monitoring related to legislation passed in the 2015 session of the Indiana General Assembly. The Assembly directed the RDA to set a goal of hiring at least 20% of workers on RDA-funded projects from Northwest Indiana cities whose unemployment rate is 20% or more above the state average. The RDA must meet this goal by 2020.

* * *

About the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority

Established in 2005 through a bipartisan effort including former Governor Mitchell E. Daniels, Congressman Peter J. Visclosky, key state legislators, and local elected officials, the RDA is quasi-governmental development entity entrusted to make public investment decisions within a regional framework for supporting catalytic infrastructure projects and inducing private sector investment. Years of successful results have made it a trusted and tested partner for growth in Northwest Indiana. For more information, visit www.rdatransformation.com or www.in.gov/rda