

MINUTES
SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION, TECHNOLOGY
AND LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS
HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
MEETING JOINTLY

August 15, 2016

The Senate Interim Committee on Transportation, Technology & Legislative Affairs and the House Interim Committee on Public Transportation met jointly at 10:00 a.m., Monday, August 15, 2016, at Dassault Falcon Jet, 3801 East 10th Street, in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Committee members present: Senators Bill Sample, Chair; Ronald Caldwell, and Jimmy Hickey; Representatives Mary P. “Prissy” Hickerson, Chair; Mike Holcomb, Vice Chair; Charles Blake, Jana Della Rosa, Dan M. Douglas, Mickey Gates, Ron McNair, Milton Nicks, Jr., Mathew Pitsch, Marcus Richmond, Brandt Smith, and James Sorvillo.

Other legislators present: Senator Joyce Elliot; Representatives Justin Gonzales, Mark McElroy, and Micah Neal.

Representative Hickerson called the meeting to order.

Comments by Committee Chairs

Representative Hickerson and Senator Sample welcomed members and guests to the meeting.

Welcome and Overview of Operations at Dassault Falcon Jet and the Clinton National Airport

Mr. Shane Carter, Public Relations Director, Clinton National Airport, welcomed committee members to Dassault Falcon Jet and provided a brief overview of the day’s events. He noted that Dassault Falcon Jet recently represented Arkansas at the Farnborough International Airshow, which is the largest in the world.

Mr. Jeff Griffin, CEO, Dassault Falcon Jet, provided an overview of the company and included the following:

- Dassault Falcon Jet is part of Dassault Aviation Group, headquartered in Mérignac, France
- the completion/service center in Little Rock occupies 1.25 million square feet of working space and is the largest Dassault facility in the world (250,000 square feet completion hangar added in 2015)
- “green” aircraft is flown to Little Rock for maintenance, system wiring, custom interiors/cabinetry, custom paint, etc.
- Dassault Aviation has an unmanned ship in development and also produces the Dassault Rafale which is a combination of an F14, F15, and F35 jet
- currently employs 1,820 workers in the completion center; 100 in service center; and 220 engineers

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m. and committee members toured Dassault Falcon Jet and the Clinton National Airport.

Mr. Ron Mathieu, Executive Director, Clinton National Airport (LIT), introduced Mr. Virgil Miller, Jr., Chairman, Little Rock Municipal Airport Commission. Mr. Miller welcomed committee members and introduced fellow Commissioners Jim Dailey, Vice Chairman/Treasurer, and Stacy Hurst.

Mr. Mathieu presented an overview of the airport and provided the following information:

- LIT is a net-tax generator and has generated over \$35 million in tax revenue to the state; \$6 million to the City of Little Rock and \$4.4 million to Pulaski County; totaling \$45,418,750 in the past 4 years
- LIT does not receive tax dollars; Federal Aviation Administration requires airport to operate as a business, to be self-sufficient, and operate at a profit; LIT is debt free
- LIT provides an annual economic impact of \$1.2 billion; serves 62 counties; 2 million passengers annually; 70 flights daily; 98% customer satisfaction rate (82% nationally); provides 4,000 jobs on 2,100 acres

- LIT has a new smart system baggage screening area and a smart park guidance system (counts parking spaces); fastest free Wi-Fi of any airport in North America—2nd fastest in the world
- Commission has approved \$20 million dollars for concourse improvements (includes new seating)
- pre 9-11 through July 2015, flights between 2 cities decreased 2%; seats have decreased 17%; flights overall have decreased 23%; 17 fewer hubs across the nation
- 30 airlines have consolidated; 10 no longer exist; 4 airlines (American, Delta, Southwest, United) control 83% of the domestic market in the United States (U.S.); Southwest carries more passengers in the U.S. than any other airline

Mr. Mathieu said flyers can go to nearly any major hub in the world from Little Rock with a one-stop connection. He spoke on the deciding factors by companies when choosing to provide air service and how LIT provides incentives to airlines in order to compete with other airports. He noted that a large percentage of airport revenue comes from parking fees, rental spaces, and concessions.