

Regional Aviation Committee Meeting December 18, 2008

The quarterly meeting of the DVRPC Regional Aviation Committee was held on Thursday, December 18, 2008 with attendance by airport owners/operators, state and local governments, consultants and the interested public. Airport representatives discussed the status of capital improvement programs and traffic levels. Commercial activity at PHL has remained busy, to date, through the economic downturn, while flights at smaller general aviation airports in the region have declined by 10 to 20% depending on the airport. Without a new federal airport funding reauthorization bill, grants to regional airports have been reduced consistent with the continuing funding resolution signed by the President.

The Transportation Safety Administration has proposed increased requirements for small airports and aircraft operating at them, regarding terrorism prevention. Also, the Committee wishes to amend and expand its input to regional federal legislators regarding capital reauthorization. Staff will draft policy positions on both the security and funding issues.

Regarding airspace in the region, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) completed a report supporting the FAA analysis and changes to departure airspace from PHL which effects Delaware County. DVRPC will provide assistance to FAA and local airports regarding expansion of the Class B airspace around PHL.

FAA has capped traffic flow at Newark to JFK airports and is proposing slot auctions, which would force airlines to bid for capacity to operate at these airports. The Port Authority of NY and NJ and the airline industry are suing FAA to stop these actions.

Local legislation in NJ and PA effecting small airports is being pursued in each legislature. Objectives include preventing eminent domain taking of airports in NJ and excluding aviation business from sales tax in PA.