

## Current Security News

The Transportation Security Administration's Opt Out program, also referred to as SPP or Screening Partnership Program, provides security screening services for airline passengers and their baggage. The Opt Out program allows airports to hire private contractors working under the TSA's guidance to conduct security screening. Opting out means that airports have the right to cease using TSA employees as security officers and replace them with private contractors. TSA, of course, would retain security oversight responsibility.

### **Airport Officials Discuss TSA Relationship, Opt-Out Program**

***Jan 04, 2006 08:30 AM (EST)***

In the following story, airport executives from across the country discuss their working relationship with TSA and their thoughts on the screener Opt-out Program.

### **How do you rate TSA's efforts in working with your airport on security issues during 2005? Are you applying for the screener Opt-out Program?**

Elaine Roberts, A.A.E., president and CEO, Columbus Regional Airport Authority: At the local level, TSA's efforts in working with the airport are very good. We are not applying for the Opt-out Program.

Jon Rosborough, director, Wilmington (N.C.) International Airport: Excellent working relationship. Partnership aimed at constantly improving customer service and increased throughput. No (to Opt-out Program).

Glenn Januska, A.A.E., director, Sioux Gateway (Iowa) Airport: We have had a good working relationship with TSA since their inception, and this past year has been no exception. At this time we have not decided to apply to opt-out or not. We will continue to assess the costs/benefits of opting out next year.

Kenneth Scott, executive director, Norfolk (Va.) International Airport: Relationships with local TSA are excellent. We do not plan to apply for screener Opt-out Program.

Tom Nolan, A.A.E., assistant director of airports, Wichita Airport Authority: Very good. Considering opt-out.

Jose Flores, director, Laredo (Texas) International Airport: Our working relationship with TSA could be better. Not applying for Opt-out Program.

Jesse VanderZanden, manager, Fairbanks International Airport: Satisfactory. At times heavy handed. Opt Out? No.

Torrance Richardson, A.A.E., executive director, Fort Wayne (Ind.) International Airport: We have a good working relationship with TSA. Currently, we are satisfied with screening performed by TSA and are not actively pursuing the Opt-out Program. However, we are always monitoring performance and program changes.

Alvin Stuart, A.A.E., operations superintendent, Salt Lake City International Airport: We have an excellent relationship with the local TSA. They have been responsive to our needs and concerns.

Gary Jackson, A.A.E., executive director, Greenville Spartanburg (S.C.) International Airport: We have experienced an excellent working relationship with TSA and have been blessed from day one with a very good FSD.

Jim Elwood, A.A.E., director, Aspen/Pitkin County (Colo.) Airport: The TSA's efforts working with us during the past year have been satisfactory. However, a number of issues could be a problem in the future. Like many airports, we have experienced staffing issues at our airport. This past summer we had security lines out the door. They have failed to pay competitive market (salaries that) reflect the cost of living differences in our valley. This has resulted in staff vacancies that limit capacity. Some shifts are short of specific genders, if a private screening is needed.

John Anderson, A.A.E., director, Boise Airport: TSA locally has gone from "D" to "AAA." New FSD as of July 1 placed an emphasis on management of resources, which has dramatically improved both passenger screening and baggage screening. We had earlier in 2005 told TSA that we are choosing to "opt in" if they could make

the necessary improvements. Doug Melvin, our new FSD, met this challenge. Therefore, we do not plan to "opt out."

Kelly Johnson, A.A.E., director, Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport Authority: They have improved somewhat. There appears to be some interest in working more with the airport on the ASI level. At this time we are not planning to apply for the Opt-out Program.