

News Release



AvTurf® Makes Aviation History by Introducing AvGrass™

CHICAGO - Oct. 20, 2004

The First Synthetic Grass Runway for General Aviation

In August of 2004, the **AvTurf®** team made aviation history again with the first takeoff and landing on a synthetic grass runway at a General Aviation Airport. The Pilot, Mark Shook from Peyton, CO made the historic flight. Since the middle of August, the airfield has experienced numerous General Aviation operations including gliders, tow planes, and helicopters. "It is the smoothest and most visible surface I ever used," remarked one pilot.



Five years of research and testing on aviation synthetic grass systems culminated in these airfield operations. "It is quite obvious, the amount of research and testing that has gone into this project far exceeds anything you would find on a football field," said Pat Carr, President of **AvTurf L.L.C.** in Chicago. Before installing the runway system, controlled lab testing was performed to ensure material integrity and strength. "The last thing we want is for the turf to wrap around the aircraft when landing," said Carr. In addition to the lab testing, special aircraft were outfitted with electronic measuring equipment, which took readings on wheel friction, braking coefficients, airframe stress, and aircraft drag. This information is critical in regards to aircraft performance standards to ensure the highest degree of safety.



The **AvTurf®** system is the patented airfield synthetic grass surface designed by aviation professionals to improve safety, reduce bird strikes and reduce delays associated with runway operations. The creation of the **AvTurf®** system began in 2000 followed by the first airport installation in Chicago in the fall of 2000. The system successfully passed numerous tests, including exposure to jet blast, the weight of commercial aircraft, and fire testing. Additionally, 80,000-pound emergency service vehicles traversed the **AvTurf®** system without any damage to the turf or equipment. Wildlife biologist observations indicated that birds failed to congregate on the surface, as they are accustomed to doing on natural turf.

The **AvTurf®** team was the first to invent, design, and install a synthetic grass safety system for airfields. Also initiated was a testing program with the FAA and airports that established the airfield synthetic grass specifications utilized at Detroit, Midway, O'Hare, and Toronto airports. The team authored a Draft Advisory Circular that was submitted to the FAA for review. The testing and research continues with the FAA Center of Excellence for Airport Technology at the University of Illinois to make new strides in airport surface technology. "Our team has personally experienced the myriad issues that face airfield environments today, making us the foremost experts in the airfield synthetic grass industry," said Carr.

Manufactured and designed for airport operations areas, the **AvTurf®** system was developed and tested specifically for the aviation environment. It has a life expectancy of 15-20 years and serves as a tool for the nation's airports to improve runway efficiency.