



Memorandum


**U.S. Department of
Transportation**

Office of the Secretary
of Transportation

Office of Inspector General

Subject: **INFORMATION:** Audit Announcement—
FAA's Airport Surface Detection Equipment-
Model X Program
Project Number: 05A3011A000

Date: August 3, 2005

From: David A. Dobbs 
Assistant Inspector General
for Aviation and Special Program Audits

Reply to
Attn of: JA-10

To: Ramesh K. Punwani
Assistant Administrator
for Financial Services/CFO

The Office of Inspector General plans to conduct an audit of the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Airport Surface Detection Equipment-Model X (ASDE-X) program. FAA is developing ASDE-X in an effort to meet its safety-related performance goals for reducing both commercial and general aviation fatalities and reducing runway incursions. Prevention of runway incursions and ground collisions has been on the National Transportation Safety Board's "Most Wanted Transportation Safety Improvements List" since 1990.

The Senate Committee on Appropriations, in its report on FAA's fiscal year (FY) 2006 appropriations expressed concern about the pace of ASDE-X deployment and reported FAA has not yet deployed systems to more than half of the planned sites due to changes in system design and additional requirements. FAA originally planned to complete ASDE-X deployment to second-tier airports (e.g., Orlando International Airport and Milwaukee General Mitchell International Airport) by FY 2007 as a low-cost alternative to Airport Surface Detection Equipment-3 (ASDE-3) radar systems, which are deployed at larger, high-volume airports. However, FAA now plans to complete deployment by FY 2009—a 2-year delay. While FAA has already procured 36 out of 38 ASDE-X systems,

only 3 systems have been commissioned for operational use. FAA has invested about \$250 million in ASDE-X and expects to spend a total of \$505 million to complete the program.

Our audit objectives are to (1) determine whether FAA's strategy for deploying ASDE-X for operational use is cost effective, (2) evaluate FAA's process for deploying ASDE-X to airports with the greatest potential of runway incursions and ground collisions, and (3) assess FAA's progress in determining whether ASDE-X can be used to improve guidance and situational awareness for air traffic controllers, pilots, and ground vehicle operators at airports.

We plan to begin our audit the week of August 8, 2005. We will contact your Audit Liaison to arrange a formal entrance conference. Kevin Dorsey is the Program Director for this audit. If you have any questions or need additional information, please call him at (202) 366-1518.

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cc: FAA Deputy Administrator
FAA Chief of Staff
FAA Chief Operating Officer
Anthony Williams, ABU-100
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