



## Lambert airport announces new roof and updated checked-bag screening system

MARCH 04, 2014 10:30 PM • BY KEN LEISER KLEISER@POST-DISPATCH.COM 314-340-8215



ST. LOUIS • Lambert airport soon will be a little easier on the eyes and the nerves with the replacement of the weathered copper roof on Terminal 1 and the streamlining of passenger luggage screening.

For years, people catching flights at the St. Louis region's primary passenger airport have faced the hassle of wheeling their checked bags to federal security officers near the airline ticket counters.

No more.

Lambert officials said the airport is wrapping up a \$50.7 million renovation of its baggage system, which includes inline Explosive Detection Systems. The luggage-screening system, which is hidden from view in a nonpublic area, is already up and running in Terminal 1. The Terminal 2 system will debut in April.

Lambert officials, joined by Mayor Francis Slay and St. Louis County Executive Charlie Dooley, also announced that work would begin this week on a \$6.7 million replacement of the decades-old copper roof on Terminal 1.

The roof was built more than 50 years ago. The aging copper is weathered, and the roof is prone to leaks, said Lambert director Rhonda Hamm-Niebruegge.

"The new skin will shine of raw copper like it did in the mid-'50s, when the terminal was built," Slay said in a statement. "The roof will slowly transform in color again with time as this airport serves new generations."

The solid copper roof will be replaced with a covering that has copper bonded with a stainless steel core. The work will move from east to west, along the four domes. Architect Minoru Yamasaki, whose works include New York's lost World Trade Center twin towers and St. Louis' Pruitt-Igoe housing complex, designed the then-ultra-modern Lambert terminal.

Airport officials showed off the new inline baggage screening beneath Terminal 1. Lambert is one of 106 U.S. airports that now feature these types of luggage-screening devices, according to the Transportation Security Administration. Machinery at the others is fed manually.

Construction of the new baggage system was in step with the so-called Airport Experience face-lift to Terminal 1, which included new flooring, lighting, restrooms and signs.

Federal security director Bill Switzer said the automated system will not only increase efficiency but reduce the likelihood of injuries among TSA officers who had to lift heavy bags into the machines.

In Terminal 1, bags are now carried from the airline ticket counters on a 4,200-foot conveyor system into one of three side-by-side screening machines.

Only one was being used on Tuesday, but the others will be available when necessary.

Bags that require a closer look are diverted to a room where officers may go through them manually to ensure there is no threat.

Terminal 2 features a shorter conveyor system, but luggage will be fed into the same types of machines.

The federal government picked up 90 percent of the overall cost through a series of grants and other funding.

Hamm-Niebruegge added that the removal of the explosive detection machines from the Terminal 2 lobby could allow for expansion of the Southwest Airlines ticketing operations.