



Emmet County News Release

For immediate release – Dec. 17, 2020

TSA Installs High-Tech Baggage Scanner at Pellston Regional Airport

Security at Pellston Regional Airport got a major boost in early November when the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) installed the Reveal CT-80, an automated baggage scanning machine, at the Emmet County location.



"We're very excited to have this machine in service at the airport," said Kelley Atkins, airport manager. "Pellston is now utilizing the same technology being used at larger hub airports. This results in increased speed of the screening process while decreasing the need for additional screening, providing a more efficient and less invasive screening process."

The Pellston Regional Airport Board learned during its August 25 meeting that TSA had been approved for the more advanced scanning equipment to be installed at the local airport.

Prior to the installation of the CT-80 machine, TSA agents checked baggage behind the ticket counters, occasionally causing flight delays. But, since the

outbreak of the coronavirus, TSA has sought out ways to streamline its operations.

"The technology employs a sophisticated algorithm to analyze the content of each bag and allows our TSA officers to rotate the image on a display screen and ascertain that no threats are contained in the bag without needing to open the luggage," said TSA's Grand Rapids Federal Security Director Roger Dubuc. "During this pandemic, an advantage of this new technology is the reduction of the number of bags that need to be manually inspected to resolve a possible threat and fewer touchpoints. Technology like this helps slow the spread of COVID-19."

Though the machine is considered small and compact by industry standards, the equipment is not hard to miss at the Pellston airport. The explosives detection system (EDS) measures about 16-feet long and uses the computed tomography (CT) architecture to provide high-resolution images of bag contents to enhance detection of possible threats and reduce false alarm rates. Travelers' luggage is now placed on the conveyor and automatically moved through the machine which is located right next to the ticket counter. Unless a suspicious item is detected during the screening process, TSA agents will not have to manually inspect each bag.

Another bonus with the upgrade in technology at the Pellston airport is it will not cost county taxpayers anything. The TSA paid for the equipment, as well as its installation, and will continue to cover the expected small increase in electrical use.

The CT-80 detection system became fully operational at Pellston's airport on Nov. 4.

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