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# News Release

## **UNISON CONSULTING DEVELOPS REPORT ON NEW FEDERAL AIRPORT REQUIREMENTS**

*Airport Cooperative Research Program (ACRP) Report No. 90, Impact of Regulatory Compliance Costs on Small Airports*

CHICAGO (October 21, 2013) -- Unison Consulting, Inc. (Unison), a leading aviation consulting firm, served as principal investigator for the recently published report, Airport Cooperative Research Program (ACRP) Report No. 90, Impact of Regulatory Compliance Costs on Small Airports. The report summarizes new or modified federal requirements imposed on airports from January 2000 through December 2010, in four categories – FAA/DOT, environmental, security and occupational safety and health (OSHA), and provides estimates of the cost impact of those requirements. The report identifies a total of 291 federal actions adopted during the study period. “Limited financial resources to fulfill compliance responsibilities is a growing concern for small hub and non-hub airports,” said Theresia Schatz, the Transportation Research Board project manager for ACRP Report No. 90. “Our support to publish this report highlighting the impact of compliance costs is aimed at our mission to progress through information exchange.”

The report estimates the cost impacts on small airports of compliance requirements. Since available data from federal agencies was limited, the primary basis for the cost estimates is survey data from small airports. Unison conducted a two-phase survey of small and non-hub airports. Phase 1 determined the proportion of airports affected by individual requirements. Phase 2 obtained cost estimates from affected airports. “Many airports reported difficulty in estimating cost impacts because compliance was accomplished with existing staff in the normal course of business with no separate accounting of time,” said Barry Molar, Unison Director. “Using the results of the Phase 1 and Phase 2 surveys, the report estimates total small airport industry compliance costs (including both initial and recurring costs, where applicable) of \$2.2 billion.”

Available for download as ACRP Web-Only Document 15: Data Supporting the Impact of Regulatory Compliance Costs on Small Airports, technical appendices present summary statistics on the range of costs, and estimates of average costs per airport, per commercial enplanement, and per commercial aircraft operation. The survey data show a wide dispersion of reported cost impacts, so that it is important to consider the interquartile range (i.e. the range of costs between the 25th and the 75th percentile), in addition to the average cost per airport. Statistical analyses found no correlation between compliance costs and airport activity levels, measured in terms of either enplanements or aircraft operations. In other words, the costs for an individual requirement for a non-hub airport with limited activity, such as Morgantown, WV could be comparable to the costs for a busy small hub airport, such as Tucson or Louisville.

Unison developed a presentation template that airports can customize with their respective data. Airports can use this template in making presentations to federal, state and local agencies and officials and airport stakeholders. “The information in the report and the presentation provides small airport management teams with concrete data on the scope of the impact of federal regulatory requirements on their airports,” said Anthony Drake, Unison Executive Vice President. “This information can be used to demonstrate the financial impact of compliance to administrative agencies that regulate airport practices and to document for local officials and stakeholders the financial impacts faced by the airport.” ACRP Report 90, ACRP Web-only Document 15 and the presentation template can be found on the ACRP website at: <http://www.trb.org/Main/Blurbs/168945.aspx>

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Unison was assisted in this research effort by Gresham Smith and Partners, Columbus Ohio, Charlotte Bryan Solutions, Vienna, Virginia and Safex, Westerville, Ohio.

**About Unison Consulting, Inc.**

Founded in 1989, Unison Consulting, Inc. ([www.unison-ucg.com](http://www.unison-ucg.com)) is a leading airport consulting firm with four practice areas: Finance & Economics, Retail Concessions Planning & Management, Information Systems, and Program Management & Control. Prior to joining Unison, the firm's founding members held senior management positions at airports, with airlines and other national aviation consulting firms. In 24 years, the firm's consultants have served more than 100 airports, including 17 of the 25 busiest U.S. airports. Unison Consulting is a certified minority and disadvantaged business enterprise (M/DBE) headquartered in Chicago with offices in Orange County (CA) and St. Louis. The firm is a privately held company.

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