

Sweeping changes in Indianapolis International Airport leader's first year

By Bruce C. Smith

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An executive of Simon Property Group and an attorney in the governor's office have joined the senior staff of the Indianapolis Airport Authority, that is undergoing sweeping change.

Nearly a year since John D. Clark was hired as executive director and chief executive officer, he has thinned at least six management positions and is rebuilding the senior ranks with his choices and a **new business** style to run the Indianapolis International Airport, the new passenger terminal and the network of small community airports.

Four appointments and changes announced are:

* **Robert Duncan**, a 37-year veteran of the

administration of the Airport Authority, will become special advisor to the CEO. An attorney and pilot, Duncan has been involved in buying thousands of parcels of **real estate** in Marion and Hendricks counties to reduce the impact of airplane noise on residents, create wildlife preserves, expand the airport and build the new passenger terminal. He has been general counsel, vice president and chief operating officer.

* **Mike Medvescek** is the new COO. A 20-year veteran of the airport authority, he has been an airfield technical supervisor, airport duty manager, general manager of airport operations and maintenance and director of airport operations. In his new role, Medvescek will oversee all aspects of airport operations and public safety.

* **Mark Hedegar** joins the Airport Authority as director of **business development** after a career at international shopping mall operator Simon Property Group. He has been senior vice president of development at Simon, managing a large portfolio of commercial real estate. At the airport he will also oversee parking, property development and retail operations.

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* Joseph Heerens will become the new general counsel. He is currently chief legislative counsel in the office of Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels. Heerens' background is in corporate and commercial law, contract review and negotiation, environmental law, mergers and acquisitions, real estate, **international business** and regulations.

A key goal in Clark's remaking of the airport's top managers is to increase income and cut expenses.

Airport operations were millions of dollars short of its budget last year, when the global recession cut deeply into travel and passenger volume and the new terminal building had a full year of operations.

Since the new Col. H. Weir Cook terminal building has more than 50 restaurants and retailers, visitors say it has taken on more of a mall and community atmosphere than the old terminal.

At least six senior managers and department heads were laid off in mid-2009.

After decades of **planning** for more than \$1 billion of construction, Clark has said he would form a new team designed to run the newly open facilities.

Also, projects are underway to develop or increase revenues from several thousand acres of airport-owned land located outside the security fence.

And consultants have evaluated the growth potential for each of the reliever airports in the metro region operated by the Airport Authority.

"With these key positions now filled, we have a new senior team in place that will begin taking action toward executing our strategic plan," Clark said in a written statement. "Although we have much to accomplish in 2010, I am confident these staffing changes will enable us to more efficiently manage and grow the entire IAA airport system."

Contact Star business reporter Bruce C. Smith at (317) 444-6081.

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