



# News Release

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## **O'HARE INTERNATIONAL GETS A LITTLE GREENER WITH FIRST-EVER AIRPORT AEROPONIC GARDEN**

***Chicago Department of Aviation Opens the O'Hare Urban Garden in  
Terminal 3 to Serve O'Hare Restaurants***

CHICAGO – The Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA) and HMSHost are pleased to announce the grand opening of the O'Hare Urban Garden, a cutting-edge, environmentally friendly aeroponic garden located in the mezzanine level of Terminal 3, G Concourse.

"On behalf of the City of Chicago and Mayor Rahm Emanuel, we are delighted to open the world's first airport aeroponic garden at O'Hare and invite passengers to take a few minutes to visit the calming garden and learn more about this unique and earth-friendly type of gardening," said CDA Commissioner Rosemarie S. Andolino.

"We are especially excited to partner with HMSHost and well-known Chicago restaurants located inside the terminal that will use the fresh, locally grown produce every day in the meals they prepare for O'Hare passengers," Andolino said.

The new 928-square-foot aeroponic garden is a joint effort between the CDA and HMSHost, a world leader in travel dining and shopping. Aeroponics is a method of growing plants in a water and mineral nutrient solution without soil. Aeroponics is becoming increasingly popular around the world as agricultural land uses must compete with developers for limited open space.

The vegetables harvested from the garden will be used at HMSHost's O'Hare restaurants including Tortas Frontera, Wicker Park Seafood & Sushi, Blackhawks Restaurant and Tuscany. Produce growing in the garden includes Swiss chard, sweet basil, purple basil, cilantro, dill, parsley, chives, Bibb lettuce, gourmet lettuce mix, habanero peppers, edible viola flowers, edible nasturtium flowers, thyme, oregano, red lettuce, and green beans.

"This is a great example of how HMSHost is looking at innovative methods of sustainability, in an effort to learn more about how we can further integrate these and other sustainable practices into our business," said Elie W. Maalouf, President and CEO, HMSHost.

"Producing and purchasing locally grown foods supports the CDA's commitment to sustainability by strengthening the local economy and job market, providing a unique learning opportunity for travelers, and reducing urban sprawl, traffic congestion, habitat loss, and pollution from transportation of produce," Commissioner Andolino added.

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## O'Hare Urban Garden/page two

During the aeroponic process, seeds are planted first in small cubes of nutrient-dense spun volcanic rock, which holds in water and naturally biodegrades. Once the plants are a certain size, they are transferred to the horizontal, aeroponic towers, where they sit under special lamps and undergoing a regular watering cycle of 15 minutes, with 30 minutes between watering cycles. The water used is recycled through the towers so that no water evaporates or is wasted. Once the produce is ready to be harvested, The remaining plant stubs will regenerate and grow more produce. Some interesting facts about the garden:

- Garden provides year-round cultivation
- Can produce a higher yield per square foot
- Requires no weed pulling
- Garden uses about two-thirds less water
- Towers are 8 feet tall with a 30-inch diameter base
- Additional produce includes sweet basil, purple basil, dill, parsley, chives, gourmet lettuce mix, Habanero peppers, edible viola flowers, edible nasturtium flowers, thyme, oregano, red lettuce and green beans
- Aeroponic, very similar to hydroponic farming, is becoming increasingly popular around the world for farming in limited space.

The Rotunda Building mezzanine frame supports special growing lamps and provides a visual emphasis to captivate passengers traveling through Concourse G.

The garden will be accompanied by an exhibit display that describes the sustainable benefits of the aeroponic system and highlights other CDA sustainability initiatives. Ticketed airport visitors can view the garden while enjoying a meal at the O'Hare Bar and Grille – a meal that may contain some vegetables and herbs grown just a few feet away!

Editor's Note –

Two high resolution photos are attached.

## O'Hare Urban Garden/page three

Photo 1 –



Photo 1 caption – Elie W. Maalouf, President and CEO, HMSHost (left) and Rosemarie S. Andolino, Commissioner, Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA) celebrate the grand opening of the O'Hare Urban Garden, a cutting-edge, environmentally friendly aeroponic garden located in the mezzanine level of Terminal 3, G Concourse. The new 928-square-foot aeroponic garden is a joint effort between the CDA and HMSHost, a world leader in travel dining and shopping. Aeroponics is a method of growing plants in a water and mineral nutrient solution without soil. This method is becoming increasingly popular around the world as agricultural land uses must compete with developers for limited open space. The vegetables harvested from the garden will be used at HMSHost's O'Hare restaurants and include Swiss chard, sweet basil and green beans. The event was held on Sept. 16, 2011.

Photo courtesy Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA)/kp

## O'Hare Urban Garden/page four

Photo 2 –



Photo 2 caption – On September 16, 2011, Rosemarie S. Andolino, Commissioner, Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA) (left) and Elie W. Maalouf, President and CEO, HMSHost cut the ribbon for the grand opening of the O'Hare Urban Garden, a unique, environmentally-friendly aeroponic garden located in the mezzanine level of Terminal 3, G Concourse. The new 928-square-foot aeroponic garden is a joint effort between the CDA and HMSHost, a world leader in travel dining and shopping. The vegetables harvested from the garden will be used at HMSHost's O'Hare restaurants and include sweet basil, cilantro, Bibb lettuce and habanero peppers.

Photo courtesy Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA)/kp

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The Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA) is self-supporting, using no local or state tax dollars for operations or capital improvements at O'Hare and Midway International airports. Together, Chicago's airports generate more than \$45 billion in annual economic activity and create 540,000 jobs for the region. Please visit [www.flychicago.com](http://www.flychicago.com) to learn more about the Chicago Department of Aviation.

The CDA continues to incorporate and expand sustainability initiatives for airport planning, design, construction, operations and maintenance, and concessions and tenants at O'Hare and Midway International Airports in accordance with the CDA Sustainable Airport Manual (SAM) Version 2.0, released in November 2010. To review case studies, key findings and new technologies, and to learn more about the upcoming Airports Going Green Conference in Chicago October 31 - November 2, 2011, please visit [www.airportsgoinggreen.org](http://www.airportsgoinggreen.org).

The O'Hare Modernization Program (OMP) transforms O'Hare's airfield from an outdated system of intersecting runways into a modern parallel runway configuration. The program will reduce overall delays at the Airport by 79 percent, and bad weather delays by 95 percent. It will create 195,000 new jobs and \$18 billion in additional economic activity each year. Please visit [www.oharemodernization.org](http://www.oharemodernization.org) to learn more about the OMP.