

AIRPORT NEEDS BREATHING ROOM

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GARY - A 61 year old Gary business celebrated a new facility in the city Wednesday as it prepared to move out of the way of the Gary/Chicago International Airport expansion.

Truck City of Gary, Inc. held a groundbreaking ceremony at 25th Avenue and Taft Street on Wednesday, announcing plans to build a \$5.5 million facility on the land.

Gerri Davis, Truck City's general manager, said her family's company has thrived and survived in Gary. "We feel that we have a responsibility to stay here," Davis said.

Truck City will leave its facility near the airport by January, Davis said.

It will be the first business to leave as the airport gets ready to expand its runway. The airport gave Truck City \$820,000 for its two parcels of land, as well as the new property at 25th Avenue and Taft Street, airport attorney Patrick Lyp said.

Davis, Lyp and airport director Chris Curry all said the potentially contentious process was a positive one from start to finish. "Very businesslike, very professional from start to finish," Davis said.

Now the airport is turning its attention to negotiations with the EJ & E and CSX railroad companies. A set of railroad tracks owned by EJ & E will need to be moved in order for the airport to expand its runway. Planners wanted to create a junction with the two companies' railroad tracks, but there was a disagreement over which company would control the junction.

Now, Curry said, engineers are trying to decide if a bridge could be built to send the EJ & E line over the CSX line. "That would resolve the problem at the junction" Curry said. When the expansion is finished, Curry said, the runway will grow from 7,000 feet to 8,000 feet, allowing the airport to serve about 90 percent of aircraft. "We can go after almost anybody," Curry said.