



For Immediate Release
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BWI Marshall Airport to Purchase Specialized Snow Vehicle

Equipment Will Clear Snow Near Technology to Provide Safe Airline Operations, Faster Return to Service in Major Winter Weather

Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport is purchasing a specialized snow vehicle that will ensure safe airline flight arrivals in poor winter weather conditions. The Maryland Board of Public Works last week approved the procurement of a 2017 Prinoth Husky, which is a snow grooming vehicle commonly used for smoothing ski slopes. The specialized equipment, also known as a snowcat, drives on top of snow and can move, flatten, till, and compact snow. BWI Marshall Airport will use the snowcat to clear heavy snow near important airfield navigational equipment that provides guidance to aircraft approaching a runway for landing.

During past major winter storms, BWI Marshall Airport needed to clear the snow from the navigational equipment. In February 2010 and January 2016, crews from Liberty Mountain Resort and Conference Center in Carroll Valley, PA, brought a snowcat vehicle to BWI Marshall to remove and smooth snow around sensitive glideslope antennas that are part of the airport's navigation system. Nearly 10 acres of snow were cleared by the snowcat during each storm to provide for safe, accurate aircraft navigation.



“The innovative use of the snowcat vehicle helped us bring critical navigation technology back online in a more-timely manner after major snowfalls,” said Ricky Smith, Executive Director of BWI Marshall Airport. “We thank Governor Hogan, Treasurer Kopp, and Comptroller Franchot for supporting this procurement. The vehicle will help ensure safe airline operations following major winter storms and a faster return to service for airport users.”

The glideslope is an important component of an Instrument Landing System (ILS), the ground-based technology that provides precision guidance to aircraft approaching and landing on airport runways. The ILS is particularly needed for aircraft operations during poor weather and limited visibility. The ILS ensures that commercial aircraft can land safely in reduced visibility due to fog, rain, or blowing snow. The systems are sensitive to uneven terrain near glideslope antenna equipment. Heavy snow can affect the accuracy of glideslope technology.



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Standard airport snow removal equipment is designed to plow or blow snow from pavement surfaces. The vehicles are not able to operate on grassy surfaces. BWI Marshall's new snow grooming vehicle will be able to operate in the large grassy areas around the glideslope antennas. The vehicle will also be used to remove snow from around the hundreds of airfield lights and signs at BWI Marshall.

The contract approved by the Board of Public Works authorizes the purchase of the Prinoth Husky for \$231,547 from Fortbrand Services, Inc., a company that sells sophisticated aviation and airfield maintenance equipment.

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