



Date: July 24, 2007
Contact: Joe Stinebaker
Communications Director
713-755-4027
Joe.Stinebaker@cjo.hctx.net

NEWS RELEASE

HARDY TOLL ROAD CONNECTOR CLOSED BRIEFLY DURING INCIDENT WITH RUSSIAN CARGO JET

Harris County emergency officials closed the Hardy Airport Connector for approximately 30 minutes this morning after a large Russian cargo jet was forced to make an emergency landing at George Bush Intercontinental Airport.

Harris County Judge Ed Emmett praised officials with the Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, the City of Houston Aviation Department, Precinct 4 Constable Ron Hickman's office and the Harris County Toll Road Authority for their swift response.

"Our emergency officials put their many hours of emergency training to good use this morning, ensuring that county residents were protected from what could have been a dangerous situation," Emmett said. "Fortunately, the plane landed safely resulting in only a minor inconvenience to area motorists."

Toll road officials shut down the Hardy Airport Connector from the Hardy Toll Road east to John F. Kennedy Boulevard to protect motorists as the jet approached the airport from the south. Emergency officials described the landing as a "tree top landing," with the jet approaching at an extremely low altitude.

The airplane, an Antonov 124 approximately twice the size of a Boeing 737, experienced problems during takeoff from Bush Intercontinental. The jet circled the area for several hours, burning most of its fuel before landing. Aviation officials cleared the plane to land at Runway 1533 at approximately 9:15 a.m. There were no injuries reported.