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A lighted runway closure X on the end of the runway at the Sioux Gateway airport in Sioux City, Iowa warning pilots that the runway is closed. Runway 31 at the Sioux City airport is temporarily closed for construction. Runway 31 is the main runway used by the Iowa Air National Guard's 185th Air Refueling Wing who fly the U.S. Air Force KC-135 Stratotanker. U.S. Air National Guard photo Senior Master Sgt. Vincent De Groot

185th ARW continues operations during runway improvements



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By TSgt Daniel Ter Haar

185th ARW

Sioux City, IA -- Runway improvements at the Sioux Gateway airport have caused the 185th Air Refueling Wing to temporarily move flight operations to Topeka Kansas.

With a number of 185th aircraft deploying earlier this month to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility, the unit has sent their remaining KC-135s to a base in Topeka to continue essential air operations.

According to Sioux Gateway Airport Director Mike Collet, the "runway rehabilitation" project that's underway will include concrete repair to the runway joints and shoulder. Collet added that there would also be new runway LED lighting installed.

The longer of the two runways at Sioux City, runway 31-13 is 9002ft long and closed this week until the expected completion date in September.

Although the airports second runway, runway 36-18, is not long enough for KC-135 aircraft, Collet said that commercial airline service should remain uninterrupted during the construction process.

185th Airfield manager Master Sgt. Jeff Rehan said that there would be a large amount of new concrete poured during the project.

"The 360,080sqft of runway shoulders are going to have new concrete and the new LED lighting will last longer and use less power," said Rehan.

Rehan also mentioned that the two 1000ft over-run safety areas at the beginning and end of the runway will be new.

Pilots who operate at the airport said that the improvements will ultimately increase safety, specifically with the increased brightness of the LED lighting system on the runway during low visibility operations.

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Lt. Col. Kelly Brouwer, the 185th Operations Support Squadron Commander said aircrew will continue to meet pilot currency requirements while continuing flying operations in Topeka. Brouwer said the intent is to have 185th aircraft and crew maintain a regular flying schedule while at Topeka.

“The 190th has been very gracious and helpful with what we need as well,” said Brouwer.

Brouwer also mentioned that unit members in Sioux City would still be supporting flight operations by managing documents and flight planning remotely.