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Foley named executive director of DSM airport

BY [KYLE OPPENHUIZEN](#), Staff Writer

Tuesday, February 11, 2014 3:35 PM

Kevin Foley, second in command at the Des Moines International Airport, will become its new executive director, the airport authority board decided this morning.

Foley takes over for Don Smithey, who announced his retirement last month. Foley has been with the airport for about five-and-a-half years, and has most recently worked as the airport's assistant executive director and general manager.

"Obviously, Don is a very tough act to follow," said Foley. "Certainly I see some challenges, but they are positive challenges, many of them as a result of growth from the expanding passenger traffic."



Ed Hansell, chair of the Des Moines Airport Authority Board, said that Foley's work with the airport in recent years impressed the board, and his appointment came at Smithey's recommendation. Hansell said he's been impressed with Foley's depth of knowledge on airport matters, including things such as airline rules and regulations and Federal Aviation Authority rules and regulations.

"No doubt the most important factor is we've been able to work with him for the last five years plus since he's been here in Des Moines," Hansell said.

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Smithey's last day at the airport is Friday, at which point Foley will take over. Smithey will stick around in a consultant role to help Foley meet other industry leaders and airline contacts.

Smithey has overseen a number of large changes at the airport, including the addition of Southwest Airlines Inc. and record passenger numbers the last two years.

Foley's job: "He's going to keep keep running the airport," Hansell said. "It's been running very successfully, and it's just keep it growing."

Foley said his goals have been outlined by the board, which includes continuing to increase passenger numbers by increasing service to and from the airport, which will also hopefully lead to lower fares. He will also be charged with leading the airport through possible expansion to keep up with growth, he said. A strategic plan prepared by consultant LeighFisher Inc. is scheduled to be presented to the board next month.

"That course has been set," Foley said. "It's a matter of maintaining that course as we move forward, and I'm comfortable with that."

In addition to his role as assistant executive director, Foley has worked as deputy director of landside operations, interim deputy director of finance and administration, and properties administrator at the Des Moines airport. He was previously an associate professor of aviation at the University of Dubuque and held a number of positions at Dubuque Regional Airport before that.

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