Leica Geosystems' Machine Control Technology Speeds Runway Construction at Spaceport America

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Norcross, Ga. (Vocus) March 18, 2010 -- Construction of a $27-million runway project for Spaceport America is on track for completion nearly two months ahead of schedule, thanks to machine control technology from Leica Geosystems.

The Spaceport project, located in a remote area 35 miles southwest of Truth or Consequences, N.M., will make space tourism a reality. The state of New Mexico and two local counties are putting up $198 million for this unique project.

Construction is being greatly accelerated with the aid of GPS and robotic total station machine control from Leica Geosystems, says David Guerra, superintendent for David Montoya Construction, the project’s contractor. “We should be finished with the runway by the third week in July – almost two months ahead of our scheduled date of September 16,” he notes. “And the Leica Geosystems machine control equipment is the reason we’re going to be early.”

After rapid preparation of the subgrade with their Leica PowerGrade 3D GPS-equipped dozers and motorgraders, a GOMACO 9500 Series fine-grade trimmer equipped with Leica PaveSmart 3D takes over to get the subgrade to plus or minus 1/100th foot. “Using PaveSmart 3D to control the trimmer alone cuts fine grading time to a third of what it takes with a motorgrader”, says Guerra. Use of the Leica Geosystems 3D-equipped trimmer should also deliver significant improvements in concrete yields for the paving phase, compared with traditional techniques.

Montoya is now gearing up for paving the 10,000-foot long runway with their Guntert & Zimmerman S850 slipform paver, The paver will make six passes, each 33.3 feet wide, to cover the 200-foot runway width also controlled by Leica PaveSmart 3D (LMGS-S) system, using high precision Leica robotic total stations, PaveSmart 3D will regulate steer, grade, draft and crossfall of the slipform paver in real-time.

Leica Geosystems Machine control saves contractors significant time because it eliminates the labor costs for detailed surveying for the runway, stakeout of hubs, setting bluetops and set up of traditional stringlines used with slipform paving plus data handling between all machines on site becomes easier throughout the entire project — the net result being a lower cost, high productivity construction process.

Additional product information:

Leica PowerGrade 3D – www.leica-geosystems.us/en/Leica-PowerGrade-3D_70038.htm

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