

TSA testing new airport X-ray machines

by UPI

WASHINGTON - The Transportation Security Administration has begun testing new high-powered X-ray machines at three major U.S. airports, USA Today reported Friday. In a bid to upgrade security, the agency may buy 500 of the machines for major airports starting this fall, said TSA chief Kip Hawley. Tests at New York's Kennedy, Washington's National and Albuquerque airports will determine how many the TSA will purchase since each machine costs about \$120,000. The new equipment would replace some of the 2,000 conventional airport X-ray machines, which have a limited ability to help security screeners detect bombs. Advanced technology X-ray machines photograph bags from two angles instead of one and show the images on side-by-side screens. The machines could speed up security lines if airport screeners don't have to X-ray bags a second time to see a different angle, Hawley said. "It's a big step," said Clark Ervin, a former Homeland Security inspector general whose investigations found screeners repeatedly missed weapons. "These steps ought to have been taken sooner." The machines are already used at airports in Europe and Canada.

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