

Feds help pay for airport runway study

Airport Authority also approves tax levy, 2012 FY budget

BY RICK HAYES

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MT. VERNON — An environmental assessment study for a runway safety project at Mt. Vernon Outland-Airport has been funded by federal agencies.

Airport Manager Chris Collins said local officials were informed this week that the Division of Aeronautics and the Federal Aviation Authority will provide the Airport Authority with a \$125,000 grant to help pay for the project, which is 99.9 percent complete, according to Collins.

The Airport Authority signed a participation agreement with its engineers, Hanson Professional Services, to supervise the environmental assessment study. The airport's local share for the project is 2.5 percent, or approximately \$3,000, Collins said. The state is kicking in another 2.5 percent, and the feds are paying for 95 percent of the study.

Collins said the next step is for the engineers to determine if there is a need for a public hearing on the environmental study. Collins said if the engineers are satisfied that there is no public interest in the project, the public hearing can be eliminated, and the project can move forward.

The runway safety project, which has been discussed for more than a decade, will take 750

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feet away from the southwest end of the runway and 750 feet will be added to the northeast end of the runway. There will also be a 1,000-foot "safety area" on each end of the runway, according to Collins. The estimated cost of the project is \$4 million.

Also this week, the Airport Authority approved its 2011-

2012 budget. The budget approved by the board shows there will be \$123,313 cash on hand by the end of the 2012 fiscal year on April 30. The Airport Authority had \$122,000 cash on hand as of May 1.

The budget prepared by Collins shows there will be \$405,500 in revenues for the year and \$404,000 in expenditures.

The airport received its largest revenue from the personal property replacement tax, estimated to be \$140,000 during the current

fiscal year. Salaries of \$182,000 is the largest expenditure, according to budget figures provided.

"I'd venture to say that a lot of airports in the country don't look that good [financially]," said board member Mike Ancona during the July 13 board meeting. "We've been very blessed," he added.

The Airport Authority also approved a tax levy of \$112,431, a 5 percent increase over last year's levy.

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