

VS

# Panel outlines seven projects to make airport better

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Winston-Salem Journal

The Airport Commission of Forsyth County has identified seven infrastructure projects, with a combined price tag of \$25.5 million, to pursue for Smith Reynolds Airport over the next five years.

Moving forward requires a 10 percent funding match, or \$2.55 million, to go with \$22.95 million in projected federal and state funding. The projects required the approval of the N.C. Department of Transportation.

In September, the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners agreed to reserve up to \$1.5 million for airport projects toward the local match.

The airport commission will pay back the county if it uses any of the money.

Airport Director Mark Davidson said the county's action allows the airport commission to comply with mandates

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## Airport

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from the Federal Aviation Administration.

Not included in the seven projects is Forsyth Technical Community College's proposal for a \$16 million aviation training campus at the airport that would be focused on such skills as maintenance, repair and overhaul services, and product manufacturing. The goal would be to open the training center by late 2019.

Several of the region's aviation companies, such as B/E Aerospace Inc., HAECO Americas, North State Aviation and Piedmont Propulsion Systems, struggle to find enough skilled workers for their production needs.

A Forsyth Tech aviation training campus would serve as a companion to a similar aviation training center that Guilford Technical Community College operates near Piedmont Triad International Airport.

Davidson stressed that the seven projects are "not a wish list," but are doable and necessary to make the airport more attractive to potential tenants and better serve existing tenants.

"We believe these projects as a whole will aid the airport's economic mission and correct some existing safety issues," Davidson said.

The projects range in cost from \$250,000 to \$11 million.

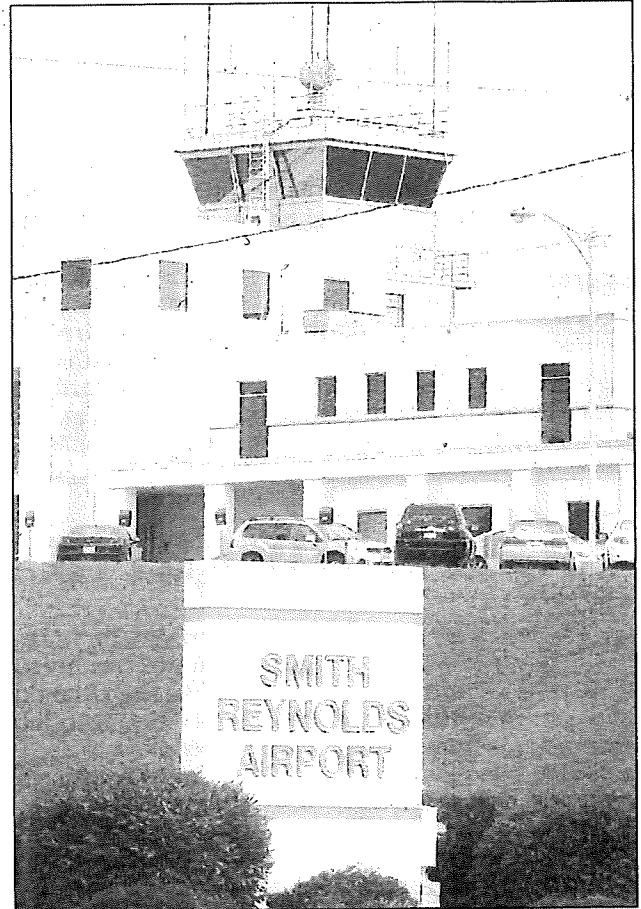
Davidson said the airport commission's priorities are not based on project size but rather on immediate need to long-range planning.

For instance, the \$250,000 project would pay for buying 5 acres of land and gaining access to 37 acres for easements for the Runway 4 approach.

The \$11 million project involves moving Taxiway A on a parallel piece of land about 6,655 feet in length. The Federal Aviation Administration and the N.C. DOT would not agree to a rehabilitation project on the existing taxiway pavement.

Other projects between now and 2020 are:

- ◆ \$6.2 million for construction of a



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- ◆ new Taxiway L (\$2.8 million) and ramp (\$3.4 million).

- ◆ \$4 million for a new lighting and signage system to replace a system that is more than 25 years old.

- ◆ \$2.36 million to rebuild the terminal apron pavement, which is in failing condition. The rebuilding is necessary for the airport to better handle large aircraft used for charter flights.

- ◆ \$1.05 million to rehabilitate about 1,100 feet of Runway 4, the final piece of project work.

- ◆ \$600,000 for replacing the airport's security and wildlife-management fence.

Davidson said the airport commission is attempting to move forward now on the Taxiway L and ramp projects, but it has to reconsider parts of the ramp initiative after construction bids came in too high.

He said the airport commission may opt to use asphalt instead of concrete to lower some of the ramp costs.

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