

## ?FAA approves new airport plan

Written by

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? ? According to a copy of a letter addressed to Salem Municipal Airport Board of Aviation Commissioners (BOAC), Bill Barnett, "The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is in receipt of plans which were submitted for the above-mentioned study (Salem Municipal Airport). We have conducted an Aeronautical Study to determine the effect of the proposed airport layout plan on the safe and efficient utilization of navigable airspace by aircraft.

Based on our study we offer no objection from an airspace utilization standpoint . . ."

The letter, dated December 18, 2008, sets out several requirements that must be met after the construction of the facility is near completion that have to do with navigational beacons. However, according to Barnett, those are normal regulations regarding the installation of beacons at an existing facility.

In the ongoing conflict between the BOAC and the Salem Common Council (SCC), FAA approval has been a sticking point. In several meetings, members of the SCC have expressed concerns due to a lack of the approval.

With the aforementioned approval and a supposedly solid financial arrangement to lease/purchase the current airport facility for an amount in excess of the estimated \$800-\$900 thousand price tag for the local match to the FAA and State of Indiana planning and construction grants, the path seems clear for the SCC to throw its support behind the project.

President-elect Obama's proposed stimulus package targets public works projects that are "shovel ready." That means any project that has met all of the regulatory requirements and are simply waiting for funding to become available. The approval of the new Salem airport by the FAA, puts the it in that group of projects ready to begin.

The proposed federal stimulus plan calls for identifying projects that have a multi-year financing schedule and shorten the cycle. In theory, the projected five year time line for construction of the new airport facility could be shorten significantly by a increase in the amount of federal funding being offered each grant cycle.