

## City of Salem and Lucas Oil close to a deal on airport purchase

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According to information provided by Salem Municipal Airport Board of Aviation Commissioners (BOAC) member Bob Woodward, the City of Salem and Lucas Oil Company are very close to inking a deal that will transfer ownership of the existing airport property to Lucas Oil and provide funds for the local match to build the new airport facility. Representatives from Lucas Oil were in Salem last week to meet with Mayor David Bower, members of the Washington County Economic Growth Partnership, and members of both the air board and the city council. Meetings also took place between the Lucas Oil people and Owen Thompson, owner of the Salem Speedway.

Woodward said that the deal to purchase the old airport is about 99 per cent complete. Assuming that negotiations go well between Thompson and Lucas Oil, everything should be signed before the end of the year.

Woodward went on to say that the engineering firm R.W. Armstrong has redesigned the plans for the new facility to have a shorter runway than the initial plan called for. The new plan includes a 3500 runway which is 1500 feet shorter than the one in the initial engineering plan but over 1000 feet longer than the current runway. After completion of that phase, the additional 1500 feet of runway will be added over time. This revision will allow the new facility to be operational within 24 months.

Woodward confirmed that the re-appraising of properties to be purchased for the new airport is still expected to begin this fall.

The next regularly scheduled BOAC meeting is Wednesday, June 17, beginning at 7pm at the airport.