



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Raleigh County Memorial Airport Expansion Ready for Take Off

With Approval of \$1.75 Million Federal EDA Grant

Major Site Development to Boost Aerospace and Cargo Jobs and Economy

Beaver, W.Va. (Feb. 4, 2021) – U.S. Senators Joe Manchin and Shelley Moore Capito, along with U.S. Rep. Carol Miller, announced the approval of a \$1.75 million grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration (EDA) that represents the final investment needed to allow for a \$8.3 million site development project at the Raleigh County Memorial Airport (RCMA).

The full announcement can be viewed on the New River Gorge Regional Development Authority (NRGRDA) Facebook site: <http://bit.ly/RCMAAnnouncement>

The airport is poised for a major influx of new businesses and increased air travel thanks to the leadership of long-time airport manager Tom Cochran and the infusion of multiple sources of funding to create site-read land to recruit aerospace and cargo firms.

Additional major funding awards include Infrastructure Jobs Development Council (IJDC) funding from the State of West Virginia (\$3,239,000), Appalachian Regional Commission funding (\$1.75 million) and U.S. Economic Development Administration (\$1.75 million) will add land, a new road connecting the airport to rail transportation, and new sites for interested companies.

Other sources of funding bring the total investment in this project to \$8,379,000.00:

Raleigh County Commission - \$365,000

Appalachian Power - \$200,000

Pendleton Community Bank - \$1 million interim project financing

Raleigh County Memorial Airport Federal Aviation Administration - \$75,000

“Raleigh County Memorial Airport is blessed with ample land and infrastructure to attract aerospace industry businesses to southern West Virginia,” said Jina Belcher, executive director of the New River Gorge Regional Development Authority. Belcher said the airport is located three miles east of Beckley and about 30 minutes from the Virginia border, offering daily commercial flights as well as private and charter options. In addition, RCMA is open 24 hours a day, employs 12 people, features two runways and two industrial parks, and is located near three interstate highways. The airport is only one mile from the convergence of I-64 and I-77, and one hour from I-81.

Cochran said the 67-year-old Raleigh County Memorial Airport Industrial Park is now one of the South’s best super sites. With phase one totaling 174 acres and the newly added phase two with 278 acres, this site is ideal for a variety of industries. Because the facility is located directly in the automotive corridor of Tennessee, Kentucky, and West Virginia, it is also well suited for auto-supply industries.

Cochran added that the region, which is home to West Virginia Institute of Technology and New River Community and Technical College, offers two- and four-year academic programs as well as an abundant labor supply for companies seeking new or expanded facilities. He said, “these training and education opportunities were part of the reason we were awarded the AEROReady Community Certification, enhancing workforce potential in seven counties.” Those counties include Raleigh, Fayette, Summers, Nicholas, Wyoming, Mercer, and McDowell.

Belcher said the 108-acre site has a well-designed infrastructure in place including an abundance of water, sewer, electricity, and gas. “Another plus for companies considering this site,” she added, “is the area offers lower utility rates than most of the nation.”

“The region’s assets on their own won’t make this project as successful as it can be,” said Cochran. “I think we (at RCMA) have a good visionary board and county officials who work together well and support what we are trying to do to improve all phases of the airport.”

Business View magazine published a detailed article on Oct. 18, 2020, on the history and growth of RCMA: <https://businessviewmagazine.com/raleigh-county-memorial-airport-room-to-develop/>

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About Raleigh County Memorial Airport: The Raleigh County Memorial Airport is an important component to Beckley and the greater Raleigh County infrastructure. Our facilities offer competitive commercial transportation opportunities and affordable options for private pilots. With Via Air offering daily flights to and from Charlotte, N.C.'s Douglass International Airport (CLT) to our affordable hangar, charter, and fuel prices, RCMA is a viable air travel solution. Within the airport fence, we have 160 acres of available property for hangar development with road access, all utilities, and direct access to the runway. Our East and West Industrial Parks are an important resource for local business development, offering more than 250 acres of commercial properties ready for development. Website: <http://flybeckley.com/>

About New River Gorge Regional Development Authority: The New River Gorge Regional Development Authority's (NRGRDA) mission is to initiate, facilitate and support the economic and community development efforts within the counties of Fayette, Nicholas, Raleigh, and Summers located in this region of southern West Virginia. NRGRDA stimulates the regional economy through business expansion and retention efforts, including an extensive portfolio of financial services; the management of sites for new companies locating to our region; and serving as a point of access for local service providers which offer a variety of technical assistance for business owners. Website: <https://nrgrda.org/>