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NRGRDA Hosts U.S. Sen. Capito at Raleigh County Memorial Airport For Update on Airport Expansion, Aerospace Innovation

Beckley, W.Va. (March 29, 2021) – U.S. Sen. Shelley Moore Capito visited the Raleigh County Memorial Airport (RCMA) today, securing an update on all aspects of the complex project and touring the sites to get a full appreciation of the airport’s potential.

She met with Jina Belcher, executive director of the New River Gorge Regional Development Authority (NRGRDA); airport manager Tom Cochran; and higher education leaders who are spearheading the airport expansion and pursuit of aerospace companies to locate there.

Belcher said she is appreciative of Senator Capito’s time and leadership invested in regional community and economic development projects. “We could not be more fortunate in having exceptional representation in Congress,” said Belcher. “It means a great deal for the New River Gorge region when you can count on our delegation to fully support pending competitive grants, research of potential sources of funding, or enacting legislation boosting our way of life.”

Cochran agreed, noting that the state’s U.S. Senators and Congressional representatives are on meaningful committees and are highly collaborative. “The airport expansion, site development for aerospace companies, and efforts to pave the way for the education of skilled workers have come together and will transform this region’s economy,” said Cochran. “Today’s visit by Senator Capito shows she and her staff understand full well the hard work and challenges that lies ahead.”

The priorities, according to Belcher, are well known and strategies are in place to address them.

- Contract to be issued for the site development of 105 acres at the Airport Industrial Park dedicated for aerospace companies;
- Pending Federal Aviation Administration grant for New River Community and Technical College (NRCTC) to initiate its announced Aviation Mechanics Training (AMT) program;
- Funding and construction of an AMT Training Hangar at RCMA to support skills education;
- Completion of Pavlik & Associates comprehensive review of skilled training needs for aerospace companies to be provided by West Virginia University Tech and NRCTC; and
- Identification and recruitment of aerospace companies to RCMA.

“We have a winning plan of action, a great team to execute it, and the prospect of creating hundreds of jobs for our region,” said Belcher.

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