

**RESOLUTION NO. 2005-09**

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING A FEASIBILITY STUDY TO DETERMINE THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF A REGIONAL AIRPORT ON NORTHEAST ARKANSAS.

WHEREAS, the cities and counties of northeast Arkansas desire that a feasibility study be conducted to determine the economic impact of a regional airport located in Walnut Ridge, Arkansas; and,

WHEREAS, the feasibility study would explore the economic impact on all communities in Northeast Arkansas, the market need and various site locations; and,

WHEREAS, the feasibility study would be conducted by an independent airport consulting firm with demonstrated expertise in the areas of economic impact, market assessment and airport development planning; and,

WHEREAS, we support efforts to seek funding through grants from the Federal Aviation Administration and the State Aeronautics Commission to conduct a regional airport feasibility study; and,

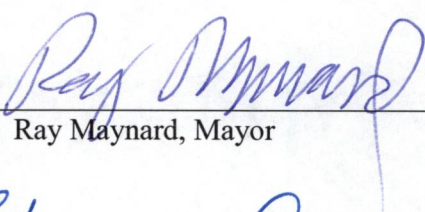
WHEREAS, the cities and counties will bear no cost or risk-of-loss through the accomplishment of the feasibility study identified in this resolution.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council with concurrence of the Mayor of Cherokee Village is in full support of this resolution.

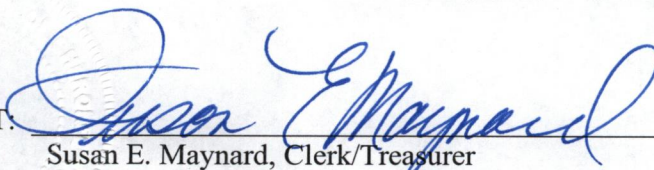
PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE CHEROKEE VILLAGE CITY COUNCIL.

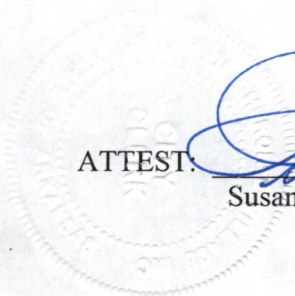
DATED: October 20, 2005

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

  
Ray Maynard, Mayor

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_

  
Susan E. Maynard, Clerk/Treasurer



# Group mulls airport idea

## Officials recommend feasibility study

BY CURT HODGES  
SUN STAFF WRITER

**JONESBORO** — Northeast Arkansas might need a regional airport, but a feasibility study should be done to find out for sure, attendees at a meeting here decided on Friday.

The series of meetings was sponsored by officials of the Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce, which is promoting the Walnut Ridge Municipal Airport, a former Army Air Forces training facility, as the site of a regional airport.

A regional airport with facilities that could handle passenger and cargo aircraft would be important to the economy of the entire region, Ted Moskal, president and executive director of the Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce, said at the meeting at the Huntington Building in Jonesboro.

"I think that's something we would all like," Moskal said. He added that in professional industry recruitment, a major desire is access to the world and a regional airport could provide that access. But more than that, he said, the area needs to work together as a region in everything it does — "That would be to the benefit of all of us."

Moskal provided information that showed the geographic center for the region

lies in an area a little south and west of Walnut Ridge. Because of that and the fact that three major U.S. highways converge at Walnut Ridge-Hoxie, as well as two major railways, he said he believes that the case for locating a regional airport facility at the Walnut Ridge Airport is strengthened.

Plus, the existing airport it is away from population centers where the noise factor of large aircraft won't be as much of a problem.

But the key question remains: Does this region need a regional airport?

It would mean convenience and accessibility, but the chief reason is economics, Moskal and others say.

Tourism is one of the economic factors that could be positively impacted, but Moskal said he believes a regional airport could have a positive effect on business and industry for the region. Studies show that establishment of regional airports don't negatively impact existing airports.

Not everyone fully agreed that a regional airport is needed here.

"I applaud Walnut Ridge for your looking at this" issue, said Jonesboro businessman Wallace Fowler, a member of the Jonesboro Municipal Air-

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# AIRPORT: Facility could have \$10-\$15 million annual economic benefit

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port commission. "But I don't believe it is feasible."

Speaking to Moskal's comparing Northeast and Northwest Arkansas, Fowler said he doesn't believe there is a comparison as far as population is concerned.

"We don't have the Tysons, and we don't have (former U.S. Rep.) John Paul Hammerschmidt who rode that horse for them" in getting the Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport built.

Fowler also said he doesn't believe the numbers exist to

support passenger service enough to meet the needs of a large airport. He also said if a feasibility study is done it should focus on the entire region.

Jonesboro Airport Commission chairman Robert Troutt said he is a little skeptical.

"The key question is not building, but whether or not anyone will really show up," he said.

Later Troutt said he would recommend to Jonesboro airport commissioners that they endorse the feasibility study, if it doesn't concen-

trate on just Walnut Ridge as a location, but rather the entire Northeast Arkansas region.

"This won't be done overnight," said Milton Smith, a Walnut Ridge banker and a member of the Walnut Ridge Airport Commission.

Moskal agreed that if the study is approved, it should consider the entire region.

Jonesboro businessman Mike Medlock, who served on the Jonesboro Airport commission for many years, said there are no known negatives to any of the area airports that would arise from

creating a regional airport.

"I believe this is a long-term economic issue for this quadrant of the state," Medlock said. "This is not a today issue, but one that extends beyond" our lifetimes.

"One thing I do know," Medlock said, "is that none of us have the ability to understand the ramifications without outside help."

Moskal agreed and said "we will need the support" of our congressional delegation as well as everyone in Northeast Arkansas.

Representatives of Sens. Mark Pryor and Blanche Lincoln attended the meeting. Moskal's presentation estimated the cost of the study at \$250,000.

It also estimated the cost of expansion-construction of the regional facility at \$50-75 million.

Most of the cost will be from Federal Aviation Administration; some will come from the state (Aeronautics Commission) and the remainder from bonds. The cost of the study would be paid for through FAA and state funds.

If the concept is approved, an authority would be named to develop and implement the plan for the regional facility.

Other figures in his report indicated that such a facility could have a \$10-\$15 million annual economic impact on the region.

The Lawrence County Chamber official said there are four qualified consulting firm that he would recommend to perform the feasibility study.

Only one of the firms would be selected.

The feasibility study, Moskel proposed, would address the economic impact, market need and site development options, among other questions.



Curt Hodges | The Sun

Ted Moskal, executive director of the Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce, talks about the idea of a regional airport in Northeast Arkansas

at a meeting in Jonesboro on Friday. Moskal's presentation centered on an expansion of the Walnut Ridge Airport to serve as the facility.

curth@jonesborosun.com