

GAYLORD HERALD TIMES

A view from the 45th Parallel

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Airport terminal set for December takeoff

By James Martinez, Staff Writer

Flying through the Gaylord Regional Airport soon will be a much more comfortable venture.



Bradley J. Butcher, AIA

Scott Woody, Airport Director

Airport Director Scott Woody says the new 4,800-square-foot terminal is nearly 80 percent complete and on schedule for completion near the beginning of December. The new general aviation terminal's layout increases space and provides amenities, from wireless Internet to comfortable sofas.

"The biggest impact for me is that it's the first impression of the Gaylord community," said Woody.

"Obviously this (current) facility is 40 years old and clearly outdated. The majority of our travelers (come for) business and golf. The amenities of the new terminal will cater toward crews and passengers."

The new terminal - twice the size of the current one - will provide luxuries such as a refurbished waiting room, Internet access, a full kitchen, two conference rooms and a pilot resource center complete with an overnight bunk room and flight planning room. Additionally, 600 square feet have been set aside for a future airport-related business.

"I think it's a beautiful building. I think it'll bring a lot of additional people into the community. There's a lot more interest in the airport because of the activity going on there. People are going to like it," said County Commissioner J. Michael Hyde in a phone interview last week.

The renovations mark an improvement over the old terminal, which will be torn down, said Woody. He pointed to the current facility's inefficient layout and lack of amenities that, in general, made serving customers difficult.

"It will bring in more business. A lot of pilots have a choice where they go and I believe in customer service. If we take care of them, they'll come back," said Woody.

According to Woody, the \$1.275-million renovation is on budget with grants coming from the Federal Aviation Authority (80 percent), the state of Michigan (17.5 percent) and Otsego County (2.5 percent). Groundbreaking took place in May.

If the building is ready, Woody hopes to have an open house around Christmas to show the community the completed terminal.

This renovation will be followed by a runway expansion of the airport's secondary runway, slated to start in the summer of 2007.