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## Dubuque Regional Airport facing \$40M expansion



Posted: May 23, 2012 6:11 PM CDT

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DUBUQUE (KWWL) - A major expansion is in the works for one eastern Iowa airport.

The Dubuque Regional Airport will soon get a brand new passenger terminal, and it comes with a nearly \$40 million price tag.

Airport manager Bob Grierson said none of that money, however, comes from general taxes.

"If you do not fly, you do not pay into this project," Grierson said Wednesday.

The Federal Aviation Administration is paying \$33,740,777, the state is paying \$1,049,298 and the Dubuque Regional Airport is paying \$5,183,378, making a total of \$39,973,453.

Grierson said all federal, state and airport dollars come from air travel, whether tax on jet fuel or user fees attached to airfare.

The plans include a new access road from US Highway 61 plus a "prairie style" building that utilizes local elements such as natural limestone.

Mike Marshall, owner of Fly DBQ Cafe, the only restaurant at the Dubuque Regional Airport, is excited for the new building. Right now, his customers can only take his food so far.

"You buy your beverages and things outside security, you can't take it through," he said.

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In plans for the new terminal, Marshall will have a restaurant plus a snack bar on the other side of security. He said he anticipates seeing business skyrocket with that.

"I'm thinking we'll probably double what we have now," Marshall said. "Once we're there in security, we can sell beverages, we can sell mixed drinks, we can sell beer."

The airport and its terminal opened in 1947 and has seen two renovations since then, but nothing to this scale.

"It's had a good 65-year life," Grierson said of the current terminal. "We've done everything we can to keep it operational as a terminal facility, but, simply put, we can't expand it anymore, we can't upgrade it anymore, the parking is insufficient. Aircraft parking is insufficient."

He said the airport sees more than 70,000 passengers come and go each year. It may not be the midwest's busiest airport, but managers are planning for the future.

"We'll have the ability to expand. We'll have the ability to handle multiple carriers simultaneously, which we don't have today," Grierson said.

Crews are now preparing the property for the new structure, which is set for completion by the end of 2016.

"I'm really excited about it. It'll be nice," Marshall said.

The new terminal project is more than a decade in the making. The airport plans to put out bids for construction in July and break ground on the building this fall.

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