Aviation facility may open by 2011

National Guard on schedule to bring operations to Greenville

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The South Carolina National Guard may have its new $44 million aviation support facility operating from Greenville County in 2011.

The facility is set to be built in the South Carolina Technology & Aviation Center (SC TAC), where a road will be realigned in anticipation of increased traffic.

The state National Guard first told *The Greenville News* in 2007 about plans to build the aviation facility in SC TAC, formerly known as the Donaldson Center Industrial Park.

Col. Pete Brooks, state National Guard public affairs officer, said the project is still on schedule. He said a groundbreaking will probably occur next year and the facility may be operating in 2011.

In May, the Greenville County Legislative Delegation Transportation Committee approved a request from SC TAC for $650,000 to realign Chapel Road. The county-owned road is used by trucks, buses, and employees traveling to the northern half of SC TAC.

Jody Bryson, executive director of SC TAC, said the realignment is "a needed infrastructure that will better serve that particular end of the runway where the aviation facility will be located."

The new aviation facility will house 10 helicopters, three South Carolina National Guard Aviation units, 70 full-time personnel, and 145 additional part-time National Guard soldiers, Bryson said.

There are several ongoing projects in SC TAC near the planned guard's aviation facility, including the construction of a school bus facility for Greenville County Schools, he said.

Those projects are expected to increase the traffic flow on Chapel Road, Bryson said.