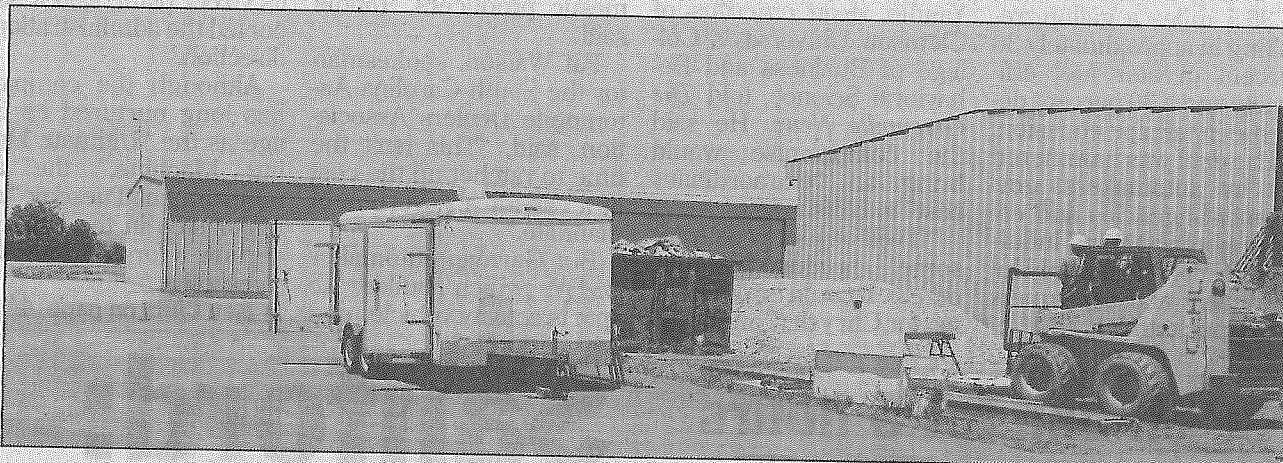


Pickens County improves airport



JOHN C. STEVENSON / STAFF

Pickens County plans to move this taxiway at the Pickens County Airport as part of ongoing airport renovations.

Moving taxiway expected to attract more business

By John C. Stevenson

STAFF WRITER
jstevens@greenvilleonline.com

Pickens County has added a project at the county airport that could help move the facility toward self-sufficiency.

The county plans to move a short section of taxiway approximately 25 feet, which will bring it into compliance with FAA regulations and allow larger planes to have access to six planned box hangars, County Administrator Chappell Hurst told members of council.

As part of renovations at the airport, construction is already under way on smaller, T-hangers,

and more T-hangers were originally planned. But county officials hope the larger, box hangars will lure owners of larger planes, which means more revenue for the airport.

"We've already got people who are on the list wanting to rent these box hangars for their larger aircraft," Hurst said after the meeting.

Ultimately, the goal is for revenue from the new hangars and gas sales to move the airport to self-sufficiency, and "we don't have to depend on taxpayers' subsidies any more," Hurst said.

"The more airplanes

you can house at the airport, the more gas sales you generate," Hurst said. "It's really going to help us a lot."

The county will receive federal and state money to pay for more than 97 percent of the project, which is expected to cost around \$1 million, Hurst said. The balance of the funds will come from money the county already set aside for hangar construction.

"It appears that once we get through, we should be very close to having enough money to construct the box hangars — six of them — and pay for this project," Hurst told council.

The state will pay 60 percent of the cost required to build up the extended taxiway to the proper elevation, Hurst said, then the FAA will pay 95 percent of the paving costs. The county will also save money by providing the dirt needed for fill.

"The county usually only has to come up with about 2 ½ percent of funding to support airport projects, so it's a real good return on your investment," Hurst said.

Hurst said moving the taxiway will take eight to nine months, and that it wouldn't cause delays with other ongoing renovations at the airport.