Pre-bid meeting draws 28 to airport project

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SENECA — The Oconee County Airport hosted a pre-bid conference Tuesday on the proposed Runway 25 and Parallel Taxiway Extension projects scheduled to get under way in the fall.

The non-mandatory conference drew 28 participants, Oconee County Procurement Director Robyn Courtright said. Sealed bids on the project must be received by 2 p.m. on July 7.

Courtright said the pre-bid conference allows vendors to ask questions related to the project of the county airport's consultants. Talbert & Bright Inc., an airport engineering consulting firm with offices in Columbia, Virginia, Charlotte and Wilmington, N.C., is working with the county on the runway and taxiway construction.

The runway extension project is part of the airport's goal to have a 5,000-foot runway on the premises. Such a runway would allow jets to land at the local airport. Also, federal regulators require a 5,000-foot runway for landing during inclement weather.

According to the Invitation to Bid posted on Oconee's Procurement Web site, the work to be performed under the contract includes pavement removal, excavation and embankment, grading, drainage, paving, marking, seeding and mulching and airfield lighting modifications.

"The majority of the work is grading and paving," Courtright said.

Once the contract is awarded, work is expected to begin in September.

Ultimately, the runway extension would add 600 feet to its current 4,400 feet.

Generally, the Federal Aviation Administration picks up 95 percent of the total cost of Airport Improvement Program projects. State and local government split the remaining 5 percent of the costs.

Oconee Regional Airport is based four miles away from Clemson University, just off Shiloh Road. The county-operated airport generates $6.3 million to the local economy, including 107 jobs in the community and $2.7 million in payroll.