

Red Deer Advocate

Airport gets funds from county

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Red Deer County has endorsed a \$350,000 grant application by the Red Deer Airport.

The money, which would come through the Alberta Community Partnerships program, would be used for engineering work for future upgrades at the increasingly busy airport.

A recently approved 20-year master plan details the work that would need to be done at the Springbrook airport to draw more airlines and aircraft to Red Deer to serve the growing market.

The biggest need: lengthening the main runway by approximately 600 metres and widening it to allow 737 aircraft enough space to take off and land. The master plan's mid-range forecast envisions 11 weekly departures for the 136-seat vessels by 2033.

The master plan envisions a small terminal expansion in 2015 and a further tripling of the expanded space in 2018. The latter expansion would provide adequate space for the peak expected passenger flow during 737 departures and arrivals.

County council also endorsed on Tuesday a \$350,000 application for two emergency management vehicles and a pair of technical rescue vehicles.

The emergency management vehicles will be shared with Elnora, Delburne and Bowden and the technical rescue vehicles would be purchased in partnership with Clearwater County.

Provincial funding help will also be tapped for a new transit bus for the route through Gasoline Alley and connecting to City of Red Deer's routes.

Under the Green Transit Incentives Program (GreenTRIP), municipalities are eligible for funding covering up to two-thirds of the cost of buses.

A low-floor transit bus equipped with GPS and bike racks runs at about \$480,000. The county would cover the rest of the cost by drawing on its Community Service Reserves, which sits at about \$4.3 million.

Mayor Jim Wood said the county bus service has seen significant ridership increases and further investment is a good idea.

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