

Aviation Maintenance Technology Facility

Franklin County's Tennessee College of Applied Technology project is gaining an addendum with an announcement that a \$2 million Tennessee Economic and Community Development grant will be going toward the construction of an aviation maintenance technology facility at Winchester Municipal Airport.

Airport Manager Zachary Colescott updated the Winchester City Council about how the grant was awarded July 1, and Winchester will have 36 months to build the facility and have it in operation.

Laura Monks, president of the Tennessee College of Applied Technology-Shelbyville, which is the parent entity involved in the Franklin County project, said Friday that this will be the first time in a decade that the TCAT program has added such a beneficial new technological program to its curriculum.

She said TCAT campuses in Memphis, Nashville and Morristown offer avionics maintenance technology courses, but there was nothing offered for potential students in Southern Middle Tennessee.

Monks said the program being offered in Winchester will fill a void and better serve aviation industries in a corridor that expands from Huntsville to the Arnold Engineering Development Complex to Oak Ridge.

She added that aviation industries are being developed in the immediate surrounding area, creating job opportunities for students who will graduate from the program.

"It's great to be able to offer something that will greatly benefit students in the area," Monks said, adding that, at present, any Franklin Country residents interested in careers in aviation technology have to make the trek to Nashville to study in the field.

Colescott said local high school students are discovering that they don't have to pursue four-year college degrees to have careers that lead to higher-paying jobs.

He said the aviation maintenance technology program will be a great benefit to the local students who venture into the high-tech field.

He said the facility is expected to total about 22,000 square feet.

The aviation maintenance technology program offered through the TCAT system prepares students to inspect, repair, service, and overhaul airframe and power plant systems.

Students also receive training in the electrical and electronics area of the aviation industry.

The program offers specialized classroom instruction and practical hands-on experience in the field of aviation, airframe, and power plant maintenance.

Upon completion of the program, students will be eligible to take the Federal Aviation Administration Certification Exam to become licensed airframe and power plant mechanics who diagnose, adjust, repair and overhaul aircraft engines and assemblies, such as hydraulic and pneumatic systems.

The educational field includes helicopter and aircraft engine specialists.

Hopkins said the project, in addition to being on time, is also on budget.