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ALERT

TOP STORY

Omaha firm, Morningside to establish academy for pilots at Sioux Gateway Airport

Dolly Butz
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Sioux Gateway Airport in Sioux City is shown. Oracle Aviation, LLC., an Omaha aviation company, plans to establish an aviation center at the airport and offer an academy for professional pilot training.

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S IOUX CITY -- An Omaha aviation company plans to open an aviation center at Sioux Gateway Airport and offer an academy for professional pilot training.

Oracle Aviation, LLC will partner with Morningside University to establish a fully-accredited aviation program, which will offer a bachelor of science degree in aviation-related fields.

The Sioux City Council will be asked Monday to approve a resolution inviting proposals for the lease of land and the construction of a new hangar facility for the program.

■ WATCH NOW: Emergency training at the Sioux Gateway Airport

According to city documents, the project includes a 39,400-square-foot facility, with 20,400 square feet of hangar space and a two-level office/training space with 5,000 square feet on two floors. Site improvements are also planned to allow for ample parking, plane movements, storage and landscaping.

"This collaboration of industry and education will provide a solid foundation for Sioux City's growth in the aviation industry. This will help broaden the employment base to include more high-tech jobs requiring higher and more diverse skill sets," the documents state.

Proposed agreements with Oracle include a commitment by the city to invest \$7 million for the construction of the new hangar facility. The city will also fund site improvements, which are estimated to cost an additional \$295,500.

The city was awarded a \$1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration to assist with the construction of the hangar facility, offices and other site improvements. The project will also be funded through approximately \$6 million in general obligation bonds.

As part of the proposed development agreement and lease agreement, Oracle will commit to leasing the new structure on a triple-net basis for an initial 20-year period, with two 10-year renewal options. Lease payments will be on a graduated scale, increasing from \$15,000 to \$33,000 per month. Oracle will also lease the existing alert hangar for an initial seven-year term for \$1,500 per month; complete all interior finishes within the facility; lease approximately 100,000 square feet of land for the

project for \$20,000 per year; invest \$1 million in furniture, fixtures and equipment; and use its best efforts to create 42 new jobs, including instructors in the new flight school.

Oracle operates a similar training center at Millard Airport in Omaha with a partnership to offer a bachelor of science degree through the University of Nebraska Omaha.

Dolly Butz

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Butz, a Drake University graduate, has been at the Journal since 2005, covering a variety of beats, including public safety, health care and city government. She has won state and national awards, primarily for coverage of addiction and mental health.