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George C. Ford

George Ford has spent decades covering business news across Eastern Iowa. Ford is a native of Lexington, Ky., but has [...]

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Updated: 20 May 2013 | 4:30 pm in B380

Sequester transfer jeopardizes Cedar Rapids airport project

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Construction of a new taxiway at The Eastern Iowa Airport may be pushed back to the next fiscal year due to a transfer of Federal Aviation Administration funds to halt furloughs and keep air traffic controllers on the job.



Construction of a new taxiway at The Eastern Iowa Airport may be pushed back to the next fiscal year due to a transfer of Federal Aviation Administration funds. (The Gazette)

The Cedar Rapids Airport Commission on Monday voted to approve plans and specifications and seek competitive bids for the \$5.1 million Taxiway E project. The taxiway would parallel the airport's secondary runway and provide easier access to aircraft.

Airport Director Tim Bradshaw said Airport Improvement Program discretionary funds initially were exempt from a mandated 10 percent across-the-board federal budget reduction.

"As the control tower furloughs and closings became a hot bed issue, Congress authorized the FAA to transfer discretionary funds from the AIP program to stop the air traffic controller furloughs and control tower closings," Bradshaw said. "They can't touch the AIP entitlement funds because those are already set aside for the airports."

"The money left over is called discretionary funding, which the FAA uses to fund other projects based on different criteria like safety and security. There's a question mark hanging over the

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Taxiway E project because we don't know if it will be funded."

Bradshaw said the FAA will be meeting later this month to decide which projects will be funded. The FAA would be providing 90 percent of the funding from AIP entitlement and discretionary funding, and the airport would pay the remaining 10 percent.

The Cedar Rapids Airport Commission on Monday awarded a \$2.46 million contract to Metro Pavers Inc. of Iowa City to expand the airport's rental car "ready" lot. Metro Pavers also will build a new parking lot for terminal employees to replace an existing lot that will be absorbed by the larger "ready" lot, and construct a new access road off 18th Street SW.

Bradshaw said the new access road will enable rental car customers to return vehicles without having to use the main terminal drive.

"Right now, they have to make a right turn into an area congested with pedestrians and other motorists," Bradshaw said."

The airport's ground transportation improvements will be funded with the customer facility charge paid by rental car customers.

"We expect to begin work on the ground transportation improvements within the next 30 days and have the project completed by the time the leaves begin to fall," Bradshaw said.

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