

**For Immediate Release
September 27, 2006**

Rutherford County Airport Awarded \$200,000 for Expansion

Forest City, NC – The Rutherford County Airport was awarded \$200,000 by the North Carolina Aeronautics Council today. This grant will allow for capital improvements to the airport including Phase 1 which includes expansion of the current hangar and parking facilities to the current airport boundaries.

County Commissioner Paul McIntosh stated: "This expansion would allow for the building of up to six additional hangars with the potential of fifty to one hundred million dollars of new investment in the County. This additional space would also allow the servicing of the many transient corporate aircraft not now using the airport due to space restrictions."



Rutherford County received the maximum grant allowed per airport, per year. The \$200,000 has a possible renewal over four years for a total of \$800,000. Future funding in years 2-4 would be evaluated and considered based on requests and needs. Funding levels are evaluated annually by the NCDOT Aviation Staff for recommendation to the Aeronautics Council. The grant was part of the Rural Airport

Development Program that supplements the current State Aid to Airport Programs, which works with publicly owned and operated airports statewide.

Under current funding constraints smaller, rural and more economically challenged communities do not compete well with other airports statewide for dollars to perform capital improvement projects on a priority basis. Rutherford County was awarded the grant based on their Tier 1 status.

North Carolina State Senator Walter Dalton supported this endeavor and stated that, "This grant will allow much needed expansion at the airport and is an indication that Rutherford County is becoming a popular place to do business."

The focus of the Rural Airport Development Program is towards capital improvement projects located at airports that can be used to help attract dedicated corporate business aircraft. The

grant does require a 2.5% match from the County (compared to 10% for non Tier 1 counties statewide)

Joe Randall, Rutherford County resident and board member for the North Carolina Aeronautics Council stated today that, “the Legislature appropriated two million dollars to help seventeen economically challenged counties. Rutherford County is one of those counties and the grant will go a long way to help this county. The growth at the airport and economic development go hand-in-hand.”

The Rutherford County Airport provides the county with a significant source of property tax revenue with 56 based aircraft at a calculated value of \$21,350,000, which results in ad valorem taxes of \$132,370 based on the county rate of \$0.62 per \$100. A recent study by North Carolina Department of Transportation estimated that there were 13,330 visitors to the area that utilized the Rutherford County Airport in the past year. Airport services include: General Aviation, Helicopter, Aircraft Rental, Aircraft Sales, Aircraft Parts Sales, Jet Fuel, Avgas, Aircraft Repair, Flight Instruction, Car Rental, Restaurant, Vending, Hangar Rental, Tie Down and Observation Points.



“We had a very profitable trip to see the North Carolina Aeronautics Council. We are very appreciative to Joe Randall who is a council member for helping us get the \$200,000 grant. These funds are very needed to finish the ramp all the way to the North and it will make space available for a larger hangar to be built.” stated Phillip Robbins with the Rutherford County Airport Authority.

The Rutherford County Airport sits on 250 acres with approximately 92 aircraft operations a day. 75% are local general aviation, 24% transient general aviation, and 1% military. The runway is 5,000 x 100 feet with weight limitations of single wheel, and 65,000 lbs. The airport is managed by FBO (Fixed Based Operator) Leading Edge Aviation, LLC.

