

Airport update

By [Richard Gould](#) | Hickory Daily Record

The Federal Aviation Administration's \$1.14 million grant will allow Hickory Regional Airport to update its main taxiway. The FAA had allowed the city to delay the bidding process for about a year to wait for the price of petroleum to drop, and that delay saved the city about \$100,000, said Airport Director Terry Clark.

J. T. Russell & Sons, Inc. has been contracted to do the work, and construction is set to begin in the spring of 2010.

The taxiway is little more than a mile long and runs parallel to the main runway, which was repaved about five years ago to conform to FAA guidelines, said Clark. "It's in pretty good shape," he said.

The updated taxiway and runway will allow air carriers and large charter aircraft to land in Hickory.

Clark said it will accommodate planes weighing up to 88,000 pounds.

The taxiway was last paved 30 years ago. "Once we get the infrastructure done, it should be about 15 to 20 years before we'll need to do it again," Clark said.

In addition to bringing the runway and taxiway in line with FAA guidelines, the updates should also prove attractive to prospective businesses considering relocation to the area, he said.

The work also is geared toward encouraging people and corporations to base their planes at the Hickory airport, Clark said. "The aviation community is excited about getting this work done," he said.

The grant requires a 2.5 percent contribution from the city and the state in the amount of \$29,000.