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ALEXANDRIA CITY COUNCIL

Runway project cleared for takeoff

\$5.8M project would also replace electrical system

By Al Edenloff

Alexandria Echo Press

ALEXANDRIA — Big improvements are almost ready to take off at the Alexandria Airport.

At its Monday meeting, the Alexandria City Council approved a grant agreement with the Federal Aviation Administration to reconstruct runway 13-31 and replace the airfield's electrical system. Runway 13-31 is the main runway at the airport.

The total cost of the project, including \$320,300 in design work, is estimated at \$5.8 million. Most of the cost, 93%, will come from federal and state grants. The city will cover the remaining 7%, which will come out of the city's Airport Development Fund.

The project, if bids are approved, could begin next fall, 2023, and the reconstruction of the runway will have a "significant impact" at the airport in the summer of 2024, according to Airport Manager Kreg Anderson. While the runway is under construction, jets

and planes with turbo engines won't be able to land on the other runways because they're not long enough, he said.

"I'm looking forward to the project but it will be a bit of a turbulent summer," Anderson told the council. He added that local businesses might be affected, and he'll be keeping them in the loop.

Back in March, the council authorized staff to submit a grant application to the FAA and the Minnesota Department of Transportation that allowed the design work to begin for the 2023-2024 airport improvement project.

The city has since found out that the application was approved.

By accepting the grant, the city is committing to completing the project within three years. If it doesn't meet the timeline, it's possible that the FFA and MnDOT would request the return of their share of the design phase improvements, \$298,700.

According to the engineering firm for the city, TKDA, the existing runway pavements and electrical systems have reached the end of their service life and need to be replaced. Also, runway safety area grading and removing obstructions — which are also part of the project — are necessary to meet current FAA standards, the firm said.

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Photos by Lowell Anderson / Alexandria Echo Press

Fairgoers enjoy an exciting ride on the Dragon Wagon roller coaster at the Douglas County Fair in Alexandria Thursday.

Fair crowds top 50,000

Economic impact estimated at \$2.5 million

By Celeste Edenloff

Alexandria Echo Press

Douglas County

The attendance at the 2022 Douglas County Fair is likely to be the second highest in the last 10 years.

As of Monday, Aug. 22, the preliminary numbers indicate that about 50,400 people enjoyed the four-day event, which was held Aug. 17 through Aug. 20 at the Douglas County Fairgrounds in Alexandria, according to Molly Maudal, fair board member and communications supervisor.

Although the four-day forecast looked like it might make a huge impact on attendance, the only day that was really impacted was Thursday, Aug. 18.

According to Accuweather, Wednesday's high reached 83 degrees,



A curious sheep looks up at the photographer in the sheep and goat barn at the Douglas County Fair in Alexandria Friday.

while Thursday, Friday and Saturday were a little cooler with 75, 76, 78 degrees respectively.

Maudal said the circus was canceled on

Thursday because of rain, but that didn't stop people from still having fun at the fair.

She said the people who stayed were troopers

and that not a lot of people flooded the gates to get out during the rain.

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File photo

The Alexandria Airport, owned by the city, was ranked the 13th busiest among all 134 public airports in the state in 2019.

2 level-3 predatory offenders moving to Alexandria area

By Travis Gulbrandson

Alexandria Echo Press

ALEXANDRIA — Two level-three predatory offenders will be moving to the Alexandria area on Sept. 1, according to press releases from local law enforcement.

Level-three offenders are considered to be at the highest risk of reoffending.

The first offender is Joshua Lee Holby, 36, who will be moving to the vicinity of Maple Drive Southeast and Golden

Gate Avenue Southeast in rural Alexandria, a press release read.

A community education meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 29, at the Douglas County Public Works meeting room

at 526 Willow Dr. Representatives from the Douglas County Sheriff's Office and the Minnesota Department of Corrections will be available to provide information on public safety.

Holby was convicted

of kidnapping in January 2019, a charge for which he was sentenced to be committed to the commissioner of corrections facility in St. Cloud for 86 months, with 491 days credit for time served.

Holby pleaded guilty to the 2017 kidnapping of Jasmine Block, who was 15 years old when she was taken from her Alexandria home and held captive for 29 days.

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School leader addresses safety, security, facilities

Unlike other areas, enrollment is up in Alexandria

By Celeste Edenloff

Alexandria Echo Press

ALEXANDRIA — In moving from the pandemic to an endemic, Alexandria Public Schools Superintendent Rick Sansted says

he wants to not only communicate with parents, but also with the public. Sansted shared information about the "state of the school district" during a Listen and Learn event Aug. 17 through the Alexandria

Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce. He not only provided information about the upcoming school year, but he also shared information about facilities, along with safety and security.

More elbow room

The newest addition at Discovery Middle School, a 30,000 square-foot addition, provides space for physical education curriculum and Alexandria Community Education youth and adult recreation. It is expected to open in November.

He said the new space offers the potential to

host larger youth athletic tournaments. Sansted said the district continues to have extremely high numbers for middle school activities, as well as high school activities. And, from a chamber impact, the district will be able to host outside events, which brings money into the community through restaurants, hotels, etc.

The cost of that project is roughly \$8 million.

Another facilities update Sansted talked about was the new addition at Woodland Elementary for the Early

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