

AIRPORT TO SEE \$400k FOR ACCESS PROJECT

WAYNESBURG — Greene County's redevelopment plans at the airport will get a \$400,000 boost from the federal government.

U.S. Representative Mark Critz, D-Johnstown, announced the grant Wednesday, August 3, 2011. The money comes from the U.S. Appalachian Regional Commission, an agency that tries to spur economic development in Appalachian communities. The county will use the grant to help pay for a new entrance to the airport property. Commissioners want to develop a small business park at the airport, and a new access road is a key part of the plans.

The new entrance will be built at Route 21 and Murtha Drive, making it a four-way interchange. The county's architect, Pennoni Associates of Philadelphia, is still working on a site plan to determine the exact layout of the access road, but it will likely end in a cul-de-sac or parking lot at the airport property.

"Our ultimate goal is to make sure traffic moves through that area safely and efficiently," said county Chief Clerk Jeff Marshall.

County planners also want to free space along Route 21 by demolishing older hangars in the western part of the property and building new ones on the eastern side. Commissioners hope the freed space could be used for the development of various retail and aviation-related businesses.

Commissioners originally had a more expansive and expensive airport expansion project in mind to include relocating all the hangars to an area north of the runway. The access road was to be constructed off Progress Drive. This plan is a scaled-down version of that project.

The county already has received about \$600,000 in state and federal funds for airport upgrades, but it used some of that money to resurface the runway and make other improvements.

Marshall said he hopes the county will be able to begin construction on the next phase of airport development next year.