

City postpones crosswind runway

Kirsten Faurie, Times editor | posted Friday, August 14, 2015

The Mora Municipal Airport's proposed crosswind runway will just have to wait.

The Mora City Council decided that the number of airport operations (take offs and landings) don't yet justify the completion of the project. To satisfy the FAA, the council decided it will postpone the project with the intention of completing the turf runway if or when the number of operations increase.

At a work session June 10, members of the city council discussed the future of the project with SEH Aeronautics Engineer, Joel Dresel.

Options discussed were to move forward with the project and complete the runway. However, this would mean a lot of money put toward construction and maintenance costs. The second option would be to abandon the project, but the city would have to pay the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) back money the city used to purchase land for the project.

The third option, which the FAA found suitable, was to postpone the project until there was a stronger justification for the runway by an increased number of operations at the airport.

Local pilot Ryan Martens said he still wishes the city would proceed with adding a crosswind runway for safety's sake.

Martens said flying is strictly a hobby for him, but his small plane struggles to land in a perpendicular wind. He said having the option to land against the wind on a turf runway would make flying a lot safer for small planes like his.

"There needs to be an option in this area, for anybody, other than roads and fields," Martens said.

Planning for the project began in 1992 to relocate Mora's former crosswind runway which was closed in 2007 after the expansion of the Industrial Park in 2001.

In 2006 the city received a \$276,000 grant from the FAA for land purchases to complete the crosswind runway project.

Grant stipulations required the city to repay those funds if they did not proceed with the project.



Planes line up at the Mora Municipal Airport during the 2013 annual Fly-In. The Mora City Council recently decided to postpone construction of a turf crosswind runway.

Since then, the FAA also added new funding guidelines stating the addition of a crosswind runway should increase the use of an airport by 500 operations per year to be considered economically viable.

Although increased number of operations is a difficult number to forecast, SEH predicted that the addition of the crosswind would only increase the number of operations by 212 each year.

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