

## PENINSULA AIRPORT GROWS



RENDERING COURTESY OF RANCOURN WILDMAN ARCHITECTS

# Changes take flight

*A planned parking deck is one example of how the Newport News/Williamsburg Airport is expanding.*

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**NEWPORT NEWS** — A year from now, more travelers should be able to bypass that long walk or shuttle ride from some of the airport's parking spots to its main terminal.

The Newport News/Williamsburg International Airport plans to open a new parking deck just outside the main terminal in early summer 2007. The airport's governing board is expected to approve a contract for a roughly \$10 million deck with more than 700 spaces at its May 18 meeting.

The project is just one example of how the airport is growing. Another is a new, taller air traffic control tower that's been under construction for a year and should be commissioned in June 2007.

The changes are helping the airport keep up with its recent yearly increases in passenger traffic. In 2005, the airport handled 1.06 million travelers, or about 15 percent more than in 2004.

For the new parking deck, the airport's governing board plans to contract with Ritchie-Curbow Construction Co. It selected the Newport News-based company for contract negotiations last week, ahead of two other companies that submitted proposals, Virginia Beach-based S.B. Ballard and Don-



The airport's new air traffic control tower, which is currently under construction, should be commissioned in June 2007.

PHOTO BY DAVE BOWMAN/DAILY PRESS

ley's, an Ohio company with a Richmond office.

The parking deck will get built on the eastern half of the parking lot closest to the main terminal, said Jim Evans, the airport's business development manager. Currently, travelers climb stairs

or take an elevator to get down to the lot. In a year's time, a covered walkway will lead from the terminal to the new deck's second level, Evans said.

The airport's rental car center will be relocated to the new deck, which the airport

## By the numbers

**\$10**  
million

estimated cost of proposed parking deck

**\$9**  
million

federal funding for air traffic control tower

Source: Newport News/Williamsburg International Airport, Federal Aviation Administration

has planned to pay for entirely through parking charges. In October, the airport selected Portsmouth-based TowneBank to help it sell tax-exempt bonds for the project.

The three companies submitted proposals for the parking deck under public-private partnership laws that are intended to get construction projects done for less money than when traditional procurement methods are used.

In December, the airport received three bids that came in up to \$6 million over budget. That led to the switch to the public-private approach, as well as to several months' delay in the project.

The new air traffic control tower is funded by about \$9 million in federal money, according to a Federal Aviation Administration spokeswoman.

Measuring about 150 feet tall, the tower is about three times the height of the existing tower, which was built in the 1950s. ■