

Town moves to annex airport

By Matthew van Buren

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The Taos Town Council voted unanimously Tuesday (Dec. 11) to pursue the annexation of the Taos Regional Airport.

According to the resolution that was passed, the town has determined the airport is a “critical town-owned facility,” and the town “needs to annex the airport in order to ensure full control over the facility.”

Town Manager Oscar Rodriguez told the council bids could be issued for a new crosswind runway as soon as the summer of 2013. He said annexation could net the town \$500-600,000 in gross-receipts taxes from the project, which is expected to cost \$20 million or more.

Rodriguez also said annexation would allow the town to take advantage of “ancillary” development, such as new hangars. He said annexation would be considered for state rights-of-way and private landowners would not be affected.

He also told the council a vote in favor of pursuing annexation Tuesday would be “far removed” from a final decision and that the council would be presented with further information after staff is able to do more research.

According to the resolution, the council has authorized Rodriguez to prepare an annexation ordinance and to seek approval from the New Mexico Department of Transportation.

Councilor Rudy Abeyta said the Taos County Commission may not ultimately agree with the move but that the municipality “has a right to grow.” He said Taos should work to make the airport, bigger, stronger and safer.

“This is the right step,” Abeyta said.