



THE TAOS NEWS

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Town, county settle airport issue for good

By J.R. Logan

The Taos News, 5/1/2014

The town and county have officially put the issue of airport annexation to rest.

Mayor Dan Barrone and Taos County Commission chairman Gabe Romero signed a settlement agreement that set in stone terms that were first presented at a joint meeting April 10.

In March 2013, the previous town council voted to annex the airport and six miles of highway right-of-way.

The town said it needed to capture additional tax revenue to pay for an expansion at the airport. The county responded by filing two lawsuits opposing the annexation.

A Taos judge ruled in favor of the county in December 2013, and the town appealed the decision.

The appeal not only cost the town and county thousands in legal fees, it put in limbo the fate of a long-awaited expansion at the airport because the town could not be sure how it would cover the required match on a federal grant.

Under the agreement signed this week, the town will drop its appeal. In turn, the county has agreed to pay the town up to \$375,000 to make up for tax revenue it would have otherwise received by annexing.

That payment is nearly identical to offers made by the county before the town voted to annex.

At the time, town officials were adamant that they couldn't rely on the county to keep its word.