

November 11, 2008

Phone survey will help gauge Oldham airport support

By Andrea Uhde

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Hundreds of randomly picked Oldham County residents will have a chance next month to voice their thoughts on a possible airport for private and corporate planes.

The county's Airport Board decided last week to have a research firm perform 400 phone surveys next month with the hope of having the results compiled by Dec. 31.

On Tuesday, Fiscal Court will consider the contract, which says the study will not exceed \$10,000. A marketing research firm from Kansas called ETC Institute will perform the study.

The board has discussed the survey for several months, hoping it will help board members and Fiscal Court get a better idea of whether residents support an airport.

The board had considered a mail survey but "the telephone survey actually allows for dialogue," board member Bob Sargis said. "As I've learned more about the whole survey business, I'm interested in having people engaged in conversation."

A mailer also could have cost around \$18,000, he said.

Sargis said the telephone surveys will be spread across all eight magisterial districts. Sargis and board member Alex Babey are members of a committee that has been considering the survey.

The committee -- which also includes Emily Liu of the planning department, Magistrate Steve Greenwell and No Oldham Airport members Jim Pearson and Ed Boles -- will help draft questions for the survey.

"I think it'll validate what we've heard from around the county," said Boles, adding that No Oldham Airport members have talked with residents who disapprove of the idea during events including the county fair, Westport RiverDaze and Oldham County Day.

Once the survey results are available, the Airport Board will present them to Fiscal Court, Sargis said.

Fiscal Court formed the airport board to oversee a feasibility study for the proposed airport. The board worked with a consultant on a site-selection study, but in February it decided to halt the study while it addressed concerns, including the economic impact of an airport.

The telephone survey could be paid for with some of the \$119,000 left from the \$204,432 the Kentucky Department of Aviation allotted for the site-selection study.

The Airport Board will next meet at 4:30 p.m. Dec. 3 in the Fiscal Court building, 100 W. Jefferson

Street in La Grange.

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