

Survey Says: No Airport

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By Laura Hagan

The results are in – the consensus of residents surveyed say they wouldn't support a general aviation airport in Oldham County at this time.

On Tuesday, county officials heard the results of a countywide survey conducted last month to determine the public's opinion on a proposed general aviation airport. The results of the survey, conducted by Kansas-based company ETC Institute, were not released to anyone before Tuesday's fiscal court meeting – not even the airport board or the committee that helped design the survey.

Karen Falk, a representative from ETC, gave a presentation to the court outlining the results of the two-page survey sent to more than 1,000 county residents. 539 responses were gathered – about 45 percent of the randomly-selected residents that received it.

Of the 539 who responded, 90 percent said they knew the county was studying a possible general aviation airport. Another question asked residents how they thought certain items would change if an airport was developed. Residents gave positive and neutral responses to how the property tax rate, number of jobs, business development and quality of emergency medical services would be affected.

However, when asked how the image of the county, overall quality of life, value of property and quality of the environment would be affected, the response was negative. 77 percent of the responses said the quality of the environment – air, water and noise – would be worse if an airport was built in the county.

As far as overall support for developing an airport, 70 percent of those who responded said they were not supportive. If taxes wouldn't be increased as a result, 65 percent still say they wouldn't be supportive. If taxes would be increased, 89 percent are not supportive.

The final question asked if the county should keep studying the feasibility of developing an airport. 71 percent said no.

Falk said the results basically show that residents are familiar with the study and see the economic benefits, but are more concerned with an airport's affect on the image of the county, quality of life and of the environment.

The airport board planned to meet Wednesday (Feb. 4) to discuss the results and determine a course of action. Airport Board Chair Jonathan Westbrook said they could have a recommendation for the fiscal court by the fiscal court meeting scheduled for Feb. 17.

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