

AIRPORT

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of the Shchuch'ye Chemical Weapons Destruction Facility, Russia's first facility to destroy chemical weapons in a safe and ecologically protective manner.

Like many Lee County appointed committees, the airport management committee only recommends to county commissioners, who have the final say. Plans call for the recommendation to be voted on by commissioners at a March 10 meeting, said Mark Fisher, division director of development.

If Parsons wins approval on that date, it will become part of the port authority team to consider what upgrades, expansions and enhancements would be necessary. Then, design, construction and maintenance phases of the baggage issue will come back to the county commissioners for approval.

"We can't give a cost for project management, until we decide what we need," Fisher said. "Once we decide what we need, then Parsons will work up a price. It then comes back to the commissioners."

Money to finance improvements at the airport usually comes from sources such as federal grants, airport fees, state grants and other sources, Fisher said. A 2.7 drop in January's passenger counts from the 2007 counts meant that 760,000 passengers still came through the airport in January 2008.

The numbers continue to be expected to grow beyond 12 million passengers a year.

Gate expansion plans to take the number of gates handling passengers from 27 to 35. The baggage handling

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—Mark Fisher

project could be done in phases, finishing in 2011. Expanding the terminal also could be done to hold additional baggage handling operations.

All work must meet constant approval from Homeland Security agencies such as the Transportation Security Agency. ■

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