

# Island runway project gets OK

1/27/97

Bill # F11

A runway improvement project at the Washington Island Airport has been given the final go-ahead at the state level.

The office of Gov. Tommy Thompson announced last week that \$70,000 in state money would be released to design an extension and realignment of the grass-strip airport's northeast-southwest runway.

Also included in the project are the construction of an apron and taxiways and the installation of runway lights. Only one of the airport's two runways is currently lighted.

The runway slated for improvement will be tilted to the northwest and extended about 400 feet, clearing its path of obstacles. At present, the runway butts up against a thick grove of trees and Airport Road to the east, making for tricky landings and takeoffs.

The new apron will provide a stable area to park and tie down aircraft, preventing the planes from getting stuck in wet weather.

Design of the project is expected to be completed by the spring of 1998. Construction is slated to be finished by next fall.

The total tab is estimated at \$300,000, counting design, land acquisition and construction. However, contractor bids have not been received yet, so the actual cost is not yet known.

The town of Washington is required to share the costs. However, an engineer with the state's Bureau of Aeronautics said last week that the town fulfilled its obligation by spending \$70,000 about a decade ago on land purchases, in anticipation of future airport work.