

**PRESS RELEASE
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BOROUGH OF WOODBINE RECEIVES \$78,500 GRANT FROM US DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Funds to be used for key study of airport infrastructure

Woodbine— Mayor William Pikolycky is pleased to announce that the US Department of Agriculture - Rural Development has awarded the Borough of Woodbine a Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) in the amount of \$78,500 to conduct a study of the existing infrastructure at Woodbine Airport as a vehicle for potential economic growth.

“The Woodbine airport started out before 1939 as a grass strip used by pilot Henry DeCinque—after whom DeCinque Boulevard is named-- to fly his Stearman Biplane, giving local people their very first airplane ride, up and down the Jersey Beaches.

In 1939, the WPA funded the actual development of this land into an airport, clearing trees and making a landing area. At the beginning of World War II, it became designated as “Outlying Field” for Wildwood Naval Station, and hundreds of pilots were trained here on how land on aircraft carriers. It was later re-designated as Atlantic City NAS’s OLF. In 1947, the airport was returned to the control of the Borough.

“The airport began as a Navy training facility back in World War II, and it has been operational as a general aviation airport ever since,” Mayor Pikolycky said. “While the airport attracts flight activity and is home to an aerial advertising and aviation business, the facility’s ability to attract additional small businesses is limited by the functionally-obsolete hangars that lack appropriate mechanical systems and which routinely require more in repairs than what the buildings are worth.”

Under the RBDG grant, the Borough will conduct a thorough analysis of the physical condition of the existing hangars and present concepts for a redevelopment strategy designed to recondition and/or replace the hangars with new, state-of-the-art facilities and related infrastructure that will meet the needs of modern small businesses. Alongside this study will be an analysis of costs to implement the identified strategy and how it might be funded.

“Assuming that the analysis indicates feasibility, the airport can become an important economic driver for Woodbine,” Mayor Pikolycky explained. “Based on conservative estimates, we are anticipating the creation of an average of 6 permanent, full-time jobs per hangar or an estimated 36 new jobs -- and a like number of part-time positions -- for Borough residents at build-out. Those are significant numbers in a small community like Woodbine.”

According to the USDA, the RBDG Program is a competitive grant designed to support targeted technical assistance, training, and other activities leading to the development or expansion of small and emerging private businesses in rural areas that have fewer than 50 employees and less than \$1 million in gross revenues.

Mayor Pikolycky noted that the Borough anticipates the study process, including the presentation of final recommendations, to take about six months. “At the end of the process, we expect to have a clear understanding of what infrastructure is needed to attract more aviation-related businesses, along with a workable, actionable plan for implementing the recommendations made as a result of the study.”

The RBDG grant is the latest award to come to the Borough from the USDA, Mayor Pikolycky concluded. “The USDA Rural Development has been a tremendous partner for Woodbine over the past 30 years, having funded water and sewer improvements, the purchase of first-responder equipment, and various building upgrades to name only a few. We look forward to continuing that relationship with this RBDG grant and beyond.”

“ We were one of only four applications approved for the full amount requested while USDA received over a million dollars in requests, demonstrating the strength of Woodbine’s potential, ” concluded Mayor Pikolycky.

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