



Artist's Rendering Courtesy College of The Albemarle

In this artist's rendering, aircraft fly over College of The Albemarle's proposed Aviation Technical Training Facility at Currituck Regional Airport in Maple. COA and Currituck officials got their first peek this week at what the \$6.8 million facility will look like.

Aviation center ready to fly

BARCO — Drawings have taken wing for the new Aviation Technical Training Facility at the Currituck Regional Airport.

An airplane hangar will be the centerpiece for the 40,000-square-foot facility, an architect told officials from College of The Albemarle and Currituck County on Monday.

The center's lobby will offer a glimpse of airplanes at its center, flanked by an avionics lab and library, all with glass fronts to create an open feel, said Angela Crawford Easterday, a member of the design team for Virginia-based contractor Sussex Development Company.

“When you walk into the front entrance, you are going to know what this facility is about,” said Easterday.

Plans for the new center were applauded by officials who say the new facility will open up new job opportunities for area students.

“This is another opportunity to make our people more marketable in the workplace,” said Vance Aydlett, chairman of the Currituck Board of Commissioners.

Roger Lambertson, chairman for the COA Board of Trustees, echoed the same hopes.

“The ultimate goal is to provide jobs for residents in our seven-county region,” Lambertson said.

Final design plans for the facility will be completed by year's end, officials said. Construction is expected to begin during the first quarter of 2012

and be completed by early 2013.

Under the projected schedule, the center would open to all classes by fall 2013.

County Manager Dan Scanlon said the \$6.8 million facility will complement future plans for the Maple/Barco area. Currituck's master plan for a "Community Center Campus" that includes the airport and training center was approved last week by the Currituck Planning Board.

Scanlon said the training center, along with the nearby N.C. Cooperative Extension Service center on Aviation Parkway, will provide an educational component to the campus. In addition, the new training center, the airport, and the county's plan for a new commerce park will help the county focus on aviation-related businesses.

The end result will be "jobs, jobs, jobs," at the campus in central Currituck, he said.

COA President Kandi W. Deitemeyer said the new facility will offer more than aviation-related training.

Other programs like machining and drafting will provide "transferable skills" to support the program, she said.

"I think this is an incredible design outside and inside," said Deitemeyer.

A floor plan for the building includes four multi-use classrooms and labs for machining, flex systems, drafting, sheet metal, composites fabrication, metrology and avionics.

On the outside, the building reflects its purpose. Two parking lots on each side of the facility look like wings from an aerial view. The entrance is shaded by a wing-like canopy, and in the back features an apron for parking aircraft.

Aydlett said the new facility will also provide more educational options to high school students throughout the region.

Althea Riddick, COA's vice president for educational programs, will be meeting with Currituck schools Superintendent Allison Sholar this week to discuss how junior high and high school students can benefit from the new COA programs.