

# THE STAR

---

## NEWS

# State grant provides help for airport infrastructure

**David Adlerstein** The Star

Published 11:38 a.m. ET Feb. 11, 2021

Gulf County has been awarded close to a half-million dollars in rural infrastructure dollars that will go towards completing infrastructure improvements at Costin Airport.

Last week, Governor Ron DeSantis announced that the county will receive \$489,420 that will go towards building infrastructure to a new hangar facility and a development property adjacent to the Port St. Joe airport to attract businesses in the aerospace industry.

The award comprises more than half of \$927,000 given to three rural Florida communities to strengthen public infrastructure through the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity's (DEO) Rural Infrastructure Fund.

The town of Esto will receive \$27,950 to make improvements to its water tank, well, and treatment plant, while Wauchula will be given (\$409,697 to assist with the improvement and expansion of parking facilities adjacent to neighboring commercial spaces and the historic City Hall and Auditorium.

Jim McKnight, chairman of the county's Economic Development Coalition, said the funds will provide the county's match to a previously announced federal grant and will pay for the water and electric service to the project site.

The grant previously announced was \$615,048 from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, in support of the infrastructure at the Costin Airport, specifically paving Cessna Drive and providing sewer services.

The combined \$1.1 million in grants provide the funding for the road and other needed infrastructure to the \$3.8 million hangar Skyborne Technology plans to build at the airport, with projections that other aerospace businesses will locate along Cessna Drive.

“We are thrilled by Governor Desantis’s announcement and thank the Department of Economic Opportunity for these grant funds that will invigorate the developing aerospace business in Gulf County,” said McKnight. “A special thank you goes out to State Rep. Jason Shoaf for his assistance with the grant process.”

DeSantis said in the release that “my administration is committed to strengthening the infrastructure in all of Florida’s communities but particularly in rural areas where there is often a significant need. These investments will help create jobs, provide these communities with the capacity for future growth, and further develop their economies.”

The Rural Infrastructure Fund provides funding to local governments for infrastructure projects in rural communities to encourage job creation, business investment, and strengthen and diversify rural economies.

“I am proud to stand with Governor DeSantis as our state continues to make strategic investments in our communities,” said Department of Economic Opportunity Executive Director Dane Eagle. “These investments not only grow and diversify our rural communities they impact the Floridians who live there by providing opportunities to expand their careers and improve the quality of life of their families.”