

Bleckley Memorial at Eisenhower National Airport



Wichita Airport Authority

June 16, 2020



Background



- A citizen group called the Bleckley Airport Memorial is requesting approval from the Airport Authority to install an airplane, a statue, and other related memorabilia inside the terminal at Eisenhower National Airport to honor Lt. Erwin Bleckley, an Army aviator and Wichita native who received the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions during World War I
- Bleckley is the only aviation Medal of Honor recipient with Wichita ties
- An aircraft of the same type that Bleckley flew on his fatal mission is available for purchase, and the group has been offered a right of first refusal to buy it



Background



- The group would do a public fundraising effort to obtain the funds needed to acquire, restore, and install the plane and the other display materials
- There would be no cost to the Airport Authority for the acquisition, restoration, engineering, and installation of the plane and other items
- The plane would be loaned to the Authority for long-term display of the plane



Background



- It is unknown at this time if the plane would fit inside the terminal, and if it can be hung from the ceiling as proposed by the group
- The group should be required to use the original terminal design team (architect and structural engineer) to determine if hanging the plane is feasible
- They should also be required to use the contractor which built the terminal to ensure a safe and proper installation



Background



- The group presented their request to the Wichita Airport Advisory Board (WAAB) at their June 1, 2020 virtual meeting
- Extensive discussion of the concerns related to finding an appropriate location inside the terminal took place considering the large size of the plane, along with issues with the plane potentially interfering with operational functions, visual distractions with public art, advertising, and wayfinding signage
- It is recommended that the Design Council be involved in the siting of the project
- The project must be done at no cost to the Authority



Possible Location for Hanging Plane in Bag Claim Area



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Concept for Hanging Plane in Bag Claim Area



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Wichita Airport Advisory Board (WAAB) Recommendation



- The WAAB voted unanimously to recommend that the Airport Authority approve this request with conditions



Recommendation



- Approve the request to privately fund the acquisition, restoration, installation, and display of the aircraft at Eisenhower National Airport if it can be determined that the aircraft will fit in an appropriate location and the installation can be accomplished without hindering other airport operations or functions





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