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#150223-LEGTOUR

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Commission Hosts Legislative Delegation Tour

The Santa Rosa County Board of Commissioners hosted a legislative delegation tour today as part of a funding request to develop Whiting Aviation Park, a one of a kind aviation focused industrial park. The project would not only help protect the industry that has brought over 14,000 jobs and that has an economic impact of \$1.1 billion per year, but has the ability to transform economic development through above average paying job creation in Santa Rosa County and Northwest Florida. The commission is requesting approximately \$4.9 million for two years in special legislative appropriations for phase one and partial phase two construction of the park. Representatives Mike Hill and Doug Broxson participated in the tour held at NAS Whiting Field with Commission Chair Don Salter.

With 269 acres available, Whiting Aviation Park would offer access to 6,000 feet of Naval Air Station Whiting Field's runway through the first of its kind limited use agreement between the U.S. Navy and the county. With runway access, monitored airspace, VFR flight conditions over 300 days each year, and with the six county area having the highest concentration of military retirees in the U.S. creating an available workforce, the future of Whiting Aviation Park offers a unique opportunity for aviation related companies in Santa Rosa County.

Plans are to develop Whiting Aviation Park over a two phased process, the first phase would be develop detail construction plans utilizing many of infrastructure items currently in place that by the Navy, updated and refined construction cost estimates, a comprehensive utility development plan, and optional bidding scenarios to support development of the park. The second phase of the aviation park would be the construction of the infrastructure improvements which would include but not limited to taxiway Yankee improvements, construction of taxiway, construction of a south entrance road, and public ramp grading and paving.

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