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## Engineering work under way on \$19 million terminal at Tunica Airport

Memphis Business Journal - by [Michael Sheffield](#)

Construction on the \$19 million, 39,000-square-foot terminal at the [Tunica Municipal Airport](#) has begun with engineering work on sewer and water lines. Barring delays, serious construction is expected to begin in January with a target opening date of July 2010.

The entire project will include grading of the land and construction of roads around the airport as well as an apron expansion and a 22,000-square-foot hangar.

The construction represents what Harry Pratt calls “a whole new world” for the airport. Pratt is a principal with the aviation division of engineering firm [Allen & Hoshall](#), which is overseeing the project.

The airport has seen the number of flights increase from three flights a week and 16,000 passengers a year in 2003 to 18 flights a week and an estimated 57,000 passengers this year, says Cliff Nash, executive director of the Tunica airport.

The airport has also added a second casino charter (Harrah’s has had service for three years) for [MGM Grand](#), which owns [Gold Strike Casino](#). It can currently accommodate three 737 jets at a time, and Nash is already anticipating adding more gates, ticket counters and more apron space for businesses and airlines that may want to operate out of there after the expansion is completed.

Nash says just the fact that construction has started on the terminal means big things for the airport and Tunica.

“We outgrew ourselves before we even started, and ideally we’d be opening the terminal right now instead of just starting construction,” Nash says. “But we’re not building the terminal for some future growth. It’s for what we’re doing right now.”

Allen & Hoshall is partnering with Minneapolis-based Architectural Alliance on the Tunica project. The firms also partnered up at [Memphis International Airport](#).

Pratt says once preliminary work is completed, a general contractor on the terminal will be selected. The goal is to have one in place by April.

Other partners include Memphis-based [APAC Tennessee, Inc.](#), on the airport expansion and [K.S. Ware & Associates LLC of Nashville](#) on the geotechnical engineering. [L&T Construction](#) of Hernando is working on the initial dirt moving.

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