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Agency of Transportation Prepares to Privatize the Caledonia County Airport

Barre, Vt. – The Vermont Agency of Transportation (AOT) has entered into a purchase and sales agreement for the Caledonia County Airport with CRAFTVT, LLC, a Vermont-based company co-founded by BETA Technologies CEO Kyle Clark. The Agency will work with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to advance the privatization process which is required before any transfer of ownership.

“We are excited about the opportunities for infrastructure improvements and economic development under new, private ownership of this vibrant Vermont airport,” said Transportation Secretary Joe Flynn. “We wish to assure current and future airport users that they will continue to have full access in perpetuity.”

Last year, AOT considered a sale or long-term lease of the Lyndonville airport and spent considerable time evaluating the possibility. The Agency and the Vermont Legislature determined that the opportunity for a sale or long-term lease should be explored with the stipulation that the airport would remain open to the public, the State would receive fair market value, and that the buyer or lessee would invest in the airport. AOT then initiated a request-for-proposal process to allow any interested parties to submit a plan. The CRAFTVT proposal met the guidelines established by the Legislature and was selected.

“I want to thank the State of Vermont for this incredible opportunity. Small, rural, general aviation airports like KCDA are critical community assets that add so much richness and opportunity to the region, ” said Clark, President of CRAFTVT, LLC. “Increasing access to the airport and enhancing amenities and services will make it a regional draw that supports businesses and recreation in the area. In my meetings with folks across the region, it’s clear there’s an energy around growing more opportunity here and the airport is part of that vision. The Northeast Kingdom is a special place, and I’m excited about being a part of the work ahead.”

The Town of Lyndon would also benefit from having the airport added to its grand list of taxable properties, along with any future developments at the airport, at a time when flood impacts have reduced the grand list.

“This is great news for Lyndon and the surrounding towns, as this community asset would get needed maintenance and additional upgrades that are overdue,” said Lyndon Town Manager Justin Smith. “We have collaborated with AOT through the years on several projects to improve the airport, and we have really appreciated working with them. Our recent discussions with the CRAFTVT team have been positive and exciting, and we are very optimistic about the future of the airport here in Lyndon.”

The Caledonia State Airport boasts a rich history. Not far from the airport, Charles Willard was the first person to take flight in Vermont, on September 15, 1910, at the Caledonia County Fair. Now, more than a hundred years later, the airport is also the site of the Vermont Aviation Museum & Flying School, the first-ever aviation museum in the state.

AOT sees many potential benefits under a new owner. Investments in the airport’s infrastructure could occur at a faster pace. Under State ownership, Caledonia County Airport’s current needs must compete with infrastructure needs at the nine other State-owned airports (<https://vtrans.vermont.gov/aviation/airports>).

KCDA is approximately 78 acres and includes a terminal building and maintenance hangar as well as several privately owned hangar houses and several other smaller buildings. CRAFTVT would first focus on rehabilitation of the airport's aging 3,300-foot runway, committing to make the repairs in the next two years. Additionally, CRAFTVT has committed to partnering and collaborating with area groups including businesses, schools, and area non-profits.

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