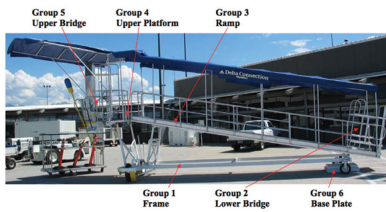


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An example of the airplane ramp and stairs to be purchased by the city. The purchase was approved at the March 11 city commission meeting and will be in place in May for the next charter flight to Laughlin, Nev. Courtesy photo

By ELLY GRIMM

• Leader & Times

Travelers at the Liberal Mid-America Regional Airport will soon notice a new change.

The purchase of a new ramp for the airport was approved unanimously at the most recent city commission meeting. The new ramp will be more compliant with standards set by the Americans with Disabilities Act. City clerk Debbie Giskie said that it was only a year ago that the need for such a ramp came up.

“We never had a need for them and now we need them in order to get this charter airplane,” she said. “We really want to continue the charter flights so that we can increase our plane routes and serve our community better.”

The need for the new ramp came after the charter company that serves Caesar’s in Nevada asked if the Liberal airport had a set of stairs. While the airport had a set of stairs, they were not ADA compliant and after the inquiry, Giskie said they started looking into getting a new set.

“Ours was a short group of stairs and it had an extension, it was pretty much vertical and there was no ramp,” she said. “This (new ramp) is going to have a ramp for wheelchairs so that people can walk on it and it also be ADA compliant.”

The new ramp will feed to the airplanes where the passengers come out of the terminal building. Giskie says that this is the first plane we’ve had that didn’t have the stairs come out of the airplane.

The three-year-old ramp will be coming from the Denver Airport and will cost \$25,000 versus a new ramp which would cost around \$40,000. The funds for the new ramp will come through the Airport Land Sale funds.

However, the ramp won’t be used for just these charter flights. Giskie said that it could also be used for incoming emergency flights coming in, larger airplanes with problems with their own stairs or for flights carrying people who are sick.

Giskie said that after the ramp is brought to Liberal, employees at the airport will receive some training and she added it should be ready for use by the next charter flight to Laughlin, Nev. at the end of May.

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