

The News Herald ([news-herald.com](http://news-herald.com)), Serving Northern Ohio

---

News

## Port Authority continues search for funding airport study

Monday, May 18, 2009

By John Arthur Hutchison

[JHutchison@News-Herald.com](mailto:JHutchison@News-Herald.com)

---

The Lake County Port Authority continues its search to help pay for a study to determine the best use of Lost Nation Airport in Willoughby.

Port Authority board members recently agreed to request a \$25,000 grant from the Cleveland Foundation's Lake-Geauga Fund.

Port Authority Executive Director John Loftus said the philanthropic organization takes a proactive approach toward development and recognizes the airport lies within two of the county's most developed cities.

"They don't have a limit per se on their requests, but it was highly recommended to me that the request be flat at about \$25,000," Loftus told the board.

The Port Authority also awaits a decision from the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency on whether it will receive \$35,000 to help fund the study, he said.

That funding would come from money generated by NOACA membership funds.

He added that if the agency does receive funding from NOACA it would likely be less than what was requested — perhaps \$15,000 to \$30,000.

The Port Authority has promoted the airport as a regional asset that is useful to communities beyond Willoughby and Mentor. Knowledge from the study also could be applied to other regional airports.

"Whatever happens at Lost Nation Airport is going to impact other airports that serve as relievers to Hopkins," Loftus said, referring to Cleveland Hopkins International Airport.

The Port Authority hopes to acquire additional funding for the study from other involved governments and previously set aside money.

Remaining dollars would need to come from the Port Authority's reserves, although the agency has no tax base and relies on local municipalities and other entities for funding.

If the Port Authority can secure the funding, the airport study would be divided into two phases.

The first phase includes a review of the contract and legal matters governing the airport, outside competitive issues, economic

impact study, opportunity for an alternative location, stakeholder and public meetings. The second phase would analyze data from the first phase, list possible courses of action, host an additional public meeting and provide a final recommendation to the Port Authority board.

The study would be conducted by Cleveland-based Michael Baker Jr.

In other action, the Port Authority decided to submit a \$50,000 grant application to the Cleveland Foundation's Lake-Geauga Fund to support the county's Coastal Development Plan.

The plan determined that \$80 million of infrastructure improvements were necessary to generate nearly \$270 million of private upland investment in the county.

The Port Authority continues to seek additional money to implement the plan in addition to \$1.25 million provided by the state last year.

To help administer the funds, seek additional financial support, and manage the engineering, permits and construction, the Port Authority wants to devote a person to the tasks full time.

---

URL: <http://www.news-herald.com/articles/2009/05/18/news/nh901674.prt>

© 2009 news-herald.com, a **Journal Register** Property