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## Inhofe discusses airport project

**By Jamie Carrick**  
Staff writer

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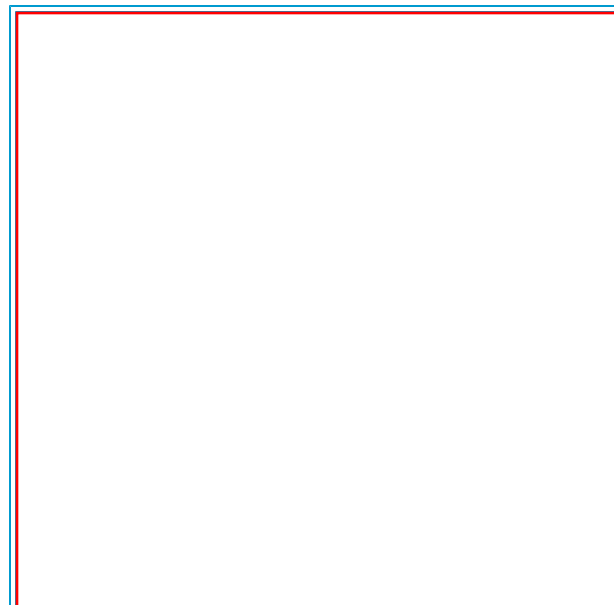
U.S. Sen. Jim Inhofe visited Durant Thursday morning and spoke with the Durant Industrial Authority and other city leaders about legislation and projects that will affect the area.

When Inhofe, a Republican from Oklahoma, arrived at Eaker Field, he was met by a number of city members and officials.

"I didn't expect to have this number (of people)," Inhofe said.

The main project Inhofe discussed was the city's plan for a new airport terminal building and air traffic control tower.

According to Tommy Kramer, executive director of the DIA, the project is "on the fast track" — the Durant Airport Terminal Planning Committee met for the first time less than six months ago.



U.S. Sen. Jim Inhofe discussed plans for a new terminal building and air traffic control tower at Eaker Field Thursday morning. Above is an artist rendering of the new building.

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NSDQ	NYSE	S&P 500
7 Jul 2008 ■ NSDQ		
2300		
2275		
2250		
2225		
2200		
10 11 12 1 2 3 4		
FinancialContent.com		
<a href="#">NSDQ</a>	2244.77	
↓ -0.61	(-0.03%)	
<a href="#">NYSE</a>	8391.84	
↓ -89.70	(-1.06%)	
<a href="#">S&amp;P 500</a>	1252.95	
↓ -16.28	(-1.28%)	
<a href="#">AMEX</a>	2141.57	
↓ -19.56	(-0.91%)	
<a href="#">RUS 2K</a>	660.22	
↓ -13.37	(-1.98%)	
<a href="#">Crude Oil</a>	141.78	
↓ -3.51	(-2.42%)	
<a href="#">30YR Yield</a>	4.52	
- +0.00	(+0.00%)	

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John Cathey is chair for the DIA and the planning committee. Other members of the planning committee are Durant Mayor Jerry Tomlinson, Councilman Tom Marcum, Kramer, City Manager James Dunegan, Dr. Mike Lee, owner of University Medical Center, Public Works Director Jerry Yandell, Brad Fortner with the Chickasaw Nation and Dr. David Conway, director of aviation and aerospace at Southeastern Oklahoma State University.

Tomlinson said the project is a collaboration between the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations, the DIA, the city of Durant and some private sectors.

The new 8,000-square-foot building will cost \$2 million, and Tomlinson hopes the project will be done within three years.

Kramer said the airport project is currently in the architectural design phase. Within 60 days, he hopes to finalize the engineering design.

Kramer said Inhofe has watched the progress of the airport project since it began and is very interested in the project.

"It's a real, real honor to have the senator call and ask for a meeting like this," Kramer said.

Inhofe, who is the last acting commercial pilot in the Senate and has been in aviation for 50 years, said he is excited about the new terminal building and tower because airports help economic and tourism growth. He said Durant needs a good terminal building and improved runways and taxiways to help attract more people to the city.

"It's great to have the senator here. He's always taken time for the community and county. He's interested in helping us move forward in the terminal project," Tomlinson said. "We'd invite him back again."

Kramer said the DIA is helping fund the terminal project to "enhance business activity," and the committee worked toward Federal Aviation Administration controlled air space, which "enhances the safety of air space around the airport."

"The growth of the airport continues every year. It all fits together in a true Team Durant partnership," Kramer said.

Inhofe also discussed the Supplemental Appropriations Bill, which passed in the Senate June 30, the last day of the fiscal year. The bill provides \$7 million for the Corps. of Engineers, who will repair infrastructures on lakes throughout the state, including Lake Texoma.

"We always appreciate having you in Durant," Dunegan said to Inhofe.

He also discussed the 9th Court of Appeals' recent bill that will make all water run-off regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency. He said the court wanted to include recreational boating in this decision, but the Senate exempted recreational boats from the bill.

"Good things are happening in Durant, America," Inhofe said.

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