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Phoenix-Mesa Gateway to charge for parking

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[Tony Natale](#), Tribune

More than \$3.2 million in improvements are scheduled next year at Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport, including the addition of 200 parking spaces.

But passengers and visitors will pay for the niceties through parking fees, which will be charged there for the first time.

"Until now, parking has been a convenience at our airport," said Brian Sexton, a spokesman for the Mesa airport formerly known as Williams Air Force Base.

The airport board at a meeting this week made the decision to institute the fees. The parking charges are aimed at providing additional revenue for the growing airport, Sexton said.

He said the 2008 budget includes \$325,000 to add a parking control system that will establish automatic collection booths as well as a parking entrance-and-exit gate with an airport employee handling parking fees. Fees are yet to be set, he said.

The total \$3,252,260 budget for the coming year is part of more than \$5 million already set aside by the Gateway Airport Authority for expenditures at the three-runway airport.

This includes \$830,000 for expansion of the terminal area parking lots, traffic signals, a crosswalk and drainage improvements.

Two small buildings, one a historical structure erected in 1940, are currently being razed as part of the parking expansion, Sexton said.

Another major portion of the approved budget for 2008 is spending more than \$1 million for additional rescue and fire protection. The board voted to spend \$135,000 for a new fire station site and \$900,000 for a new firetruck.

"The board's approval of capital projects allows the airport authority to accelerate passenger service growth and achieve the vision we all share of serving 5 million passengers a year out of Gateway," said Lynn Kusy, executive director.

The board also approved spending \$40,000 to buy and train bomb detection dogs for use at the airport. The funds will be added to more than \$350,000 already estimated, but not yet approved, by Mesa for its airport security program.

The airport has been steadily expanding with the addition of commercial flights offered by Allegiant Air and Vision Airlines. It is also a major part of the development of residential, commercial and industrial areas on more than 50 acres surrounding the airport called the Gateway Plan.