

Donated defibrillator makes DeKalb County Airport safer

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Monday, June 06, 2011, 12:01am

AUBURN — The DeKalb County Airport is a safer place to be, after an anonymous benefactor donated a portable automated external defibrillator to the airport last month.

Lara Gaerte, co-owner of the airport's fixed base operator Century Aviation, said the idea to add an AED device came about six months ago from airport manager Russ Couchman.

"It really came about because of Russ' vision for the airport," Gaerte said. "We would never have thought of needing an AED before."

While the airport wasn't able to purchase the device due to its cost — an estimated \$1,800 — Gaerte mentioned Couchman's vision to one of Century's vendors, and the vendor took little convincing. Within months the vendor donated the full cost for a LifePak 500 AED device to the airport.

The AED was purchased and now is housed at the airport's terminal. All airport staff members will take training to learn how to use the device June 15 from the staff at DeKalb Memorial Hospital, Couchman said.

"This saved us money, but the bigger picture is saving a life," Couchman said about the donation.

Gaerte said the airport has emergency contingency plans for everything from an aviation accidents to spills.

"What this piece of equipment does is enhance our emergency plans with regard to people," she said. "This is one more thing we can do to make sure we have the safest airport possible. I hope we never have to use (the AED), but I am glad it is here."

Images



Lara Gaerte, left, and her husband, Tony Gaerte, right, present a portable automated external defibrillator to the airport May 27 at the DeKalb County Airport Authority meeting. Accepting the device on the behalf of the airport is airport authority president, Jim Mason, center. NICHOLE HACHA-THOMAS

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