

**Application Score Sheet**  
(Revised 9/2/2020)

Proposed Project: Franklin County Board of County Commissioners, Apalachicola Regional Airport Fuel Delivery System Upgrade (#191)  
Proposed Project/Program County: Franklin  
Board of County Commission Support: Yes

Total Projected Project Cost: \$2,284,000  
Match Provided: \$1,225,000  
Triumph Funds Requested: \$1,059,000  
Triumph Funds Recommended by Staff: \$1,059,000

Score: B  
ROI: 5.4%

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**Economic Analysis and Score**

The Franklin BOCC requests a Triumph award of \$1,059,000 to undertake improvements to the fuel delivery system at the Apalachicola Regional Airport. The proposed award represents 46.4 percent of total project costs.

The proposal and subsequent communications with the applicant note the important role the airport played in search and rescue operations following Hurricane Michael as the only facility in the area that could provide fuel for search and rescue missions throughout the hurricane-impacted area. Further, other potential training opportunities that would enhance the continued viability of military training missions in NW FL have been identified for the airport. While specific job creation commitments cannot be made in conjunction with these possible uses, the improvements to the airfield, particularly when coupled with the investments to be made by the Florida Department of Transportation could cause increase in utilization and thus direct benefits to the local economy.

The Triumph statute clearly envisioned the possibility of funding “grants to local governments in the disproportionately affected counties to establish and maintain equipment and trained personnel for local action plans of response to respond to disasters, such as plans created for the Coastal Impacts Assistance Program.”

A 2019 study by the MITRE Corporation uses several alternative methods to assess the value of equipment delivered using FEMA funding. The present project shares some of those characteristics. Subject matter experts assessed the monetary value of these investments when measured against standards of reduced risk of lives lost, of injuries, of time without necessities, or property damages, and of business losses, as well as quality of life. After weighting these categories, the study found an overall relative change in benefits of 5.4 percent from the model baseline in an application to 16 Florida counties, but that variance in the valuation of components driving this change was large and meant that a positive ROI could not be definitively associated

with the FEMA spending. MITRE found similarly inconclusive results in applying revealed preference techniques and in applying breakeven analysis to examine the benefits to emergency preparedness spending.

Taken together, the enhanced emergency preparedness and the possible increase in military utilization could be responsible for badly needed economic impact to the three-county rural area that was so badly damaged by Hurricane Michael. This proposal from the Franklin BOCC clearly meets that criterion and the proposed improvements have now been shown by recent experience to be valuable in terms of both time and money saved. The project is clearly eligible for funding under the provisions enacted by the Legislature. However, it is not possible to assign a direct job count to the project. For this reason, staff score this project as a “B.”

### **Project Summary (based on information provided by the applicant)**

The Franklin County Board of County Commissioners is requesting \$1,059,000 in Triumph Gulf Coast grant funds to upgrade the fuel delivery system at the Apalachicola Regional Airport in partnership with the County's contracted fixed base operator (FBO) Centric Aviation, LLC. The funds would be used to replace the aging fuel delivery system and purchase a back-up generator in conjunction with ongoing infrastructure upgrades being made by the Florida Department of Transportation.

Apalachicola Regional Airport, owned by Franklin County, is the only public airport in the 3 rural counties of Gulf, Franklin, and Wakulla eligible to receive federal aviation dollars. It is the largest airport between Panama City and Tallahassee. The airport contains 3 runways, each 5,000 feet long, and can handle all sizes of private planes and jets services for these 3 counties.

The project proposes to replace the fuel storage tanks and pumps, and purchase and install a back-up generator with the grant funds. All of the improvements would be owned by the county. Centric Aviation would continue to manage and operate the airport and the fuel system as well as provide the fuel trucks that are an integral part of delivering fuel to airplanes, helicopters, and any other purchaser of aviation fuel.

The existing system, first installed approximately 30 years ago, has outlived its life expectancy. The airport fuel system was under heavy use during the Hurricane Michael regional recovery effort, and only through extraordinary measures of Centric and the State of Florida did the airport continue to provide fuel when the regional power grid failed. For a period of time during the response and recovery period, Apalachicola Airport was the only facility able to provide fuel for the search and rescue missions through the hurricane area.

The airport was the only facility the U.S. Coast Guard could get fuel from during the hurricane response. The following missions were reported by the U.S. Coast Guard as coming from the airport. October 10- 15 lives saved; 59 assists involving 7 USCG helicopters and 1 CBP H60. October 11- 11 lives saved; 169 assists involving 12 USCG helicopters and 2 CBP H60s.

In the preceding 12 months before Hurricane Michael, Centric pumped 83,000 gallons of jet fuel in aircraft via fuel trucks. During Hurricane Michael, Centric preloaded 3,000 gallons of fuel into

the jet fuel truck. When the regional power grid failed Centric was able to support the Coast Guard for search and rescue missions the night of October 10 because of the fuel trucks. That night Centric pumped 2,200 gallons into 7 Coast Guard helicopters involved in saving 15 lives and assisted 53 other rescues.

In the preceding 12 months, Centric pumped 43,000 gallons of Avgas into aircraft via the fuel truck and another 2,000 gallons via the self-serve fuel terminal located at the fuel farm. The preferred method of fuel delivery is via full-service fuel trucks provided by Centric, but Centric must have a fuel farm and pumping system to store the necessary fuel.

The addition of the back- up generator is necessary so that the airport can continue to operate during emergencies. During Hurricane Michael, the state of Florida was preparing to send a back-up generator down to the Apalachicola Airport via military Blackhawk helicopter if Centric and Duke Energy had not made other arrangements. The county has expressed its appreciation for the great effort Centric and Duke Energy went to maintaining services at the airport, but the county does not want to be in the position of relying upon the State to provide a generator transported via a helicopter during the next disaster. It is critical to the airport that during disaster and non-disaster times, the airport fuel system continue to work.

The existing fuel delivery system at AAF is antiquated, and is in danger of being beyond repair. If this happens, the system will be unable to pass Florida state inspections. Fuel leaks are a potential problem with the current system.

After Hurricane Michael, FDOT had committed to the Apalachicola Airport that they would provide funds for a back-up generator but then they realized they had over-committed for the funds they currently have available. Current FDOT funds went to back-up generators for Panama City airport and the Marianna airport. FDOT has promised Franklin County that it will provide funds in a future year for a back-up generator or some other equivalent improvement at the airport.

The State of Florida considers aviation to be a target industry. The Apalachicola Regional Airport continues to receive millions of dollars in state and federal funding to maintain the runways, taxiways, stormwater systems, etc. The county is currently updating the airport Master Plan, and will be opening bids for a new access road for the industrial park. As the State of Florida promotes aviation in the region, the Apalachicola Regional Airport is poised to transform the region as opportunities come along. Apalachicola Regional Airport in Franklin County is the only public airport in the 3 disproportionately affected counties of Gulf, Franklin, and Wakulla eligible to receive federal aviation dollars. Franklin County is aggressively seeking drone manufacturers to the airport and has had several leads.

Franklin County and Centric are partnering together to provide a local match of funds, and the property that will house the project. The project would be sustained by the revenue stream created from the sale of fuel to provide for long-term maintenance and operation of the fuel farm.

***Additional Information Regarding the use of Apalachicola Regional Airport immediately following landfall of Hurricane Michael.***

*Rescue, relief and prioritized economic restoration were greatly facilitated by an available and reliable source of Jet A and Avgas fuel at the fuel delivery system at AAF. This available and reliable fuel allowed the United States Coast Guard, and many other parties, to save at least 29 lives, and perhaps prevent six deaths in the Florida panhandle (in the Pensacola to Tallahassee region).*

*As evidence of this rescue, relief and prioritized economic restoration Robert Dietrich, the Florida State Emergency Response Team (SERT) Manager, wrote the following on June 24, 2019:*

*“Air Operations Branch (AOB) was activated in anticipation of a projected aviation need following the landfall of Hurricane Michael. The hurricane’s quick development and progress towards the state left little time to conduct pre-landfall operations. Despite the minimal planning time, the partners in AOB quickly came together to form a united plan and solid coordinated response operation. Many of these partners included the Florida Fish and Wildlife, Florida National Guard,*

*U.S. Coast Guard, Customs and Border Protection, Civil Air Patrol, Florida State University, Florida Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration, and several more.”*

*“In part of the pre-planning, coordination was conducted with local airports, fuel vendors, and with the FAA and U.S. Air Force and Air National Guard airspace planners, to name a few. The airspace plan, in particular, was a critical document developed and continuously updated throughout the response. This plan contained aeronautical guidance and communications assignments and was combined with additional information such as airport status, fuel availability, logistics staging areas, and other mission critical info.”*

*“Post landfall, the U.S Coast Guard conducted initial search and rescue operations. Their quick response resulted in several life-saving rescues and provided responders with an initial gauge of the devastation left behind in the storm’s path. Customs and Border Protection also began conducting initial food/supply missions in addition to supporting direct search and rescue operations. Rotary wing Search and Rescue recorded 29 lives saved with 267 assisted post-storm. Critical to their operations and the following resupply efforts was the assistance received from local airports, such as Apalachicola Regional (AAF), whose efforts in coordinating on-site operations, fuel, and flight management was outstanding. [225 missions were flown in the first five days.]”*

*“As response operations continued, the aviation effort shifted to providing food and water to isolated areas. After landfall the roads to the coast were heavily damaged, delaying the initial delivery of much needed supplies. In order to expedite the delivery of food, water, and medical supplies, the AOB coordinated several airlift missions. The Army National Guard’s coordinated response resulted in the delivery of over 1,000 cases of water and 7,000 meals being delivered to over five heavily impacted areas. Concurrently, other state and federal partners continued integrated operations with state and federal Urban Search and Rescue teams, and provided much needed information to the SERT planners.”*

*The Apalachicola Regional Airport (AAF), was able to provide critical assistance in the results related above by Robert Dietrich, because of the following factors: (1) Centric Aviation is the FBO for AAF; (2) the Franklin County Emergency Operation Center (EOC) backs up to the airport, just south of Centric; (3) one of Centric's owners, Tara Maugham, risked her own safety to stay at AAF through the landfall of Michael, and during the following weeks of disaster recovery; (4) the U.S. Coast Guard reported to Maugham that AAF had the only available fuel within 150 miles of Michael's landfall; (5) Maugham husbanded the limited Jet A and Avgas inventory to provide fuel as needed on a critical priority basis for the search and rescue vehicles at AAF; (6) this prioritizing of scarce assets, especially for aerial rescue efforts, illustrates the strong logic for the \$1,084,000 investment by the Triumph Gulf Coast fund for a Fuel Delivery System Upgrade at AAF.*

*Prioritizing during natural disaster responses is very similar to medical triage after a major accident. Responders must first estimate the actual conditions on the ground, before spending their most precious asset, time.*

*After Hurricane Michael, the most urgent reality was two-fold; fuel and passable roads were in very scarce supply. Fuel and passable roads were thus "not reliable" for days, and sometimes for weeks. Almost every organization involved in rescue, relief and prioritized economic restoration was mostly "blind" to actual conditions on the ground. For example, Duke Energy reported that it could not determine the operational status, or even the physical condition, of its key Odena Operations Center, because of debris blocking almost every road in Franklin County. Duke Energy thus could not send hundreds of its own emergency responders to its other physical assets without knowing the operational condition of Odena.*

*Aerial reconnaissance out of the Apalachicola Regional Airport allowed the following organizations (and many others) to prioritize their deployment of other scarce resources: U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Customs & Border Protection, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Florida Air National Guard, Florida Army National Guard, Florida Fish & Wildlife, Florida Department of Transportation, and the Civil Air Patrol.*

*The physical proximity of AAF to Hurricane Michael's landfall also allowed scarce aerial vehicles to mitigate the "Tyranny of Distance". For example, Commander Scott E. Lugo, (Air Operations Officer for U.S. Coast Guard Station Mobile) reported the following to Mark McCranie (author of this analysis document) in a phone call on June 20, 2019: "There was a 45-minute transit time from Mobile to AAF."*

*Search and Rescue flights out of Mobile thus did not endure the 90-minute round trip, because of the available and reliable fuel at AAF. They could thus spend much more time on station searching and assessing physical conditions.*

*Aerial reconnaissance saved days, and sometimes weeks, in prioritizing the restoration of critical services, including fuel, electricity, food and potable water. Aerial reconnaissance and assessment are much more time effective and cost effective after natural disasters than surface reconnaissance and assessment. The Apalachicola Regional Airport provided urgently needed*

*availability and reliability when there were very few other options in the Pensacola to Tallahassee region.*

**Funding and Budget (as provided by the applicant)**

5. Please provide a Project/Program Budget. Include all applicable costs and other funding sources available to support the proposal.

<b>Exhibit A</b>						
<b>Project # 191, Airport Fuel Delivery System Upgrade</b>						
Budget		\$2,284,000.00				
Estimated construction start date if applicable		2021				
Estimated education component start date if applicable						
		<b>Design and Construction</b>	<b>Category 2</b>	<b>Category 3</b>	<b>Category 4</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Project Total</b>						
	2020	1,200,000.00	-	-	-	1,200,000.00
	2021	1,084,000.00	-	-	-	1,084,000.00
	2022	-	-	-	-	-
Calendar Year 4		-	-	-	-	-
Calendar Year 5		-	-	-	-	-
Calendar Year 6		-	-	-	-	-
Calendar Year 7		-	-	-	-	-
Calendar Year 8		-	-	-	-	-
Calendar Year 9		-	-	-	-	-
Calendar Year 10		-	-	-	-	-
Calendar Year 11		-	-	-	-	-
<b>Project Total</b>		<b>2,284,000.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,284,000.00</b>
<b>Triumph</b>						
	2020					-
	2021	1,059,000.00				1,059,000.00
	2022					-
Calendar Year 4						-
Calendar Year 5						-
Calendar Year 6						-
Calendar Year 7						-
Calendar Year 8						-
Calendar Year 9						-
Calendar Year 10						-
Calendar Year 11						-
<b>Triumph Total</b>		<b>1,059,000.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,059,000.00</b>
<b>Grantee</b>						
	2020					-
	2021	25,000.00				25,000.00
	2022					-
Calendar Year 4						-
Calendar Year 5						-
Calendar Year 6						-
Calendar Year 7						-
Calendar Year 8						-
Calendar Year 9						-
Calendar Year 10						-
Calendar Year 11						-
<b>Grantee Total</b>		<b>25,000.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>25,000.00</b>
<b>FDOT</b>						
	2020	1,200,000.00				1,200,000.00
Calendar Year 2						-
Calendar Year 3						-
Calendar Year 4						-
Calendar Year 5						-
Calendar Year 6						-
Calendar Year 7						-
Calendar Year 8						-
Calendar Year 9						-
Calendar Year 10						-
Calendar Year 11						-
<b>FDOT</b>		<b>1,200,000.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,200,000.00</b>

FDOT Current and Anticipated Future Projects

<b>Project</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Justification</b>
Access Road Improvements	\$1.2M	Fuel delivery trucks use this road to access the apron to deliver the fuel.
Rehabilitate Airfield Pavements	\$779,711	Rehabilitation of apron pavements including in front of the fuel farm to provide reliable access.
Pavement Marking Rehabilitation	\$300,000	This project will remark the taxiway centerline markings leading to the fuel farm.
Airfield Pavement Rehabilitation	\$800,000	Rehabilitation of apron pavements from an additional runway including in front of the fuel farm to provide reliable access.
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$3,079,711</b>	

Letters of Support

Hurlburt Field