

[<Back to search result list](#) **The Louisville Times, Volume 71, Number 7, August 8, 1984**  — **Three counties involved Airport expansion plans raise growth questions [ARTICLE+ILLUSTRATION]**

## Three counties involved Airport expansion plans raise growth questions

By Karen Kos

The Jefferson County Airport—home base for the jets of Boulder County-based corporations like Storage Technology and IBM—needs about 800 feet of southern buffer land in this county for runway improvements.

Fine, say some Boulder County officials—as long as that border stays open from other development.

Ensuring that Boulder County's land use planning objectives aren't simply sidestepped by developers is the issue officials and planners in both Jefferson and Boulder counties will be ironing out over the next few months.

According to Boulder County Land Use Director Ed Tepe, Jeffco officials will have to apply for an amendment to Boulder County's Comprehensive Plan, which designates the proposed runway extension area for agricultural and open space purposes.

Designated by the Federal Aviation Administration as a "general aviation" facility to handle small private and commercial air traffic, Jefferson County Airport is also intended to relieve some of the overflow from Stapleton International and Arapahoe County airports.

Jeffco Airport Authority Chairman Bill Reeve told the county commissioners last Thursday that safety is the primary reason for extending the airport's northwestern runway, its proximity to the mountains sometimes making takeoffs and landings risky.

"The large company jets, like Storage Tech flies, have to be able to take off, (and in an emergency) lose an engine and stop on the remaining runway," he told the commissioners last Thursday. Plans are to add another 1,500 feet to the existing 7,500-foot strip, which would necessitate rerouting Colorado Highway 128 two miles further north in Boulder County.

"From a safety standpoint, I don't think anyone would object" to the runway extension, Tepe said. Boulder County's main concern is that "we want to leave that (southern boundary) area as free from development as possible."

Tepe suggested earmarking some of Jeffco's project funding from the federal government for open space purchases along the new highway route.

The airport improvements will require special arrangements not only between Jeffco and Boulder County authorities, but with other municipalities as well, noted County Planning Commission member Dick Ekrem.

"I think the intergovernmental relationship between Broomfield and the county is very important," he said, referring to the non-binding guidelines the county has with other municipalities to uphold the Comprehensive Plan.

Since Broomfield is located in three metro counties—Adams, Boulder, and Jefferson—that city "is going to grow one way or the other," Ekram said. Only through "very close cooperation between the county and Broomfield," he said, will it be possible to limit that city's growth in this jurisdiction.

Ekrem was referring to a 1980 incident in which the city of Broomfield extended its borders to encompass and allow the development of land tagged by Boulder County for open space.

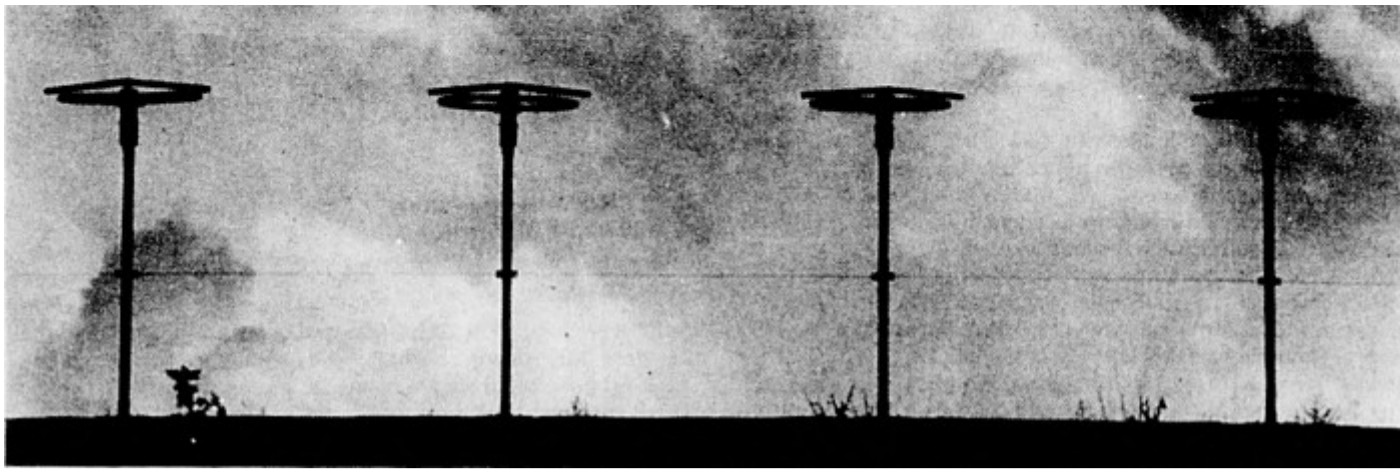
County Planning Commission Chairwoman Leona Stoecker said this week she is concerned both with the safety and land use planning aspects of the issue. However, she said she is reserving judgement on the matter until she receives more information.

Ekrem said he sees Jeffco Airport as "the only logical (venue of) growth for aviation in the metro area," given the lack of plans at the other major metro airports for expansion.

"I believe that Jeffco should be allowed to do some expansion," he said. "The negative side of the coin (is) if Jeffco expands, is that going to cause undue growth in Boulder County—and damage to our comprehensive plan?"

The planning commission will likely hear the Jeffco proposal sometime in November. If the commission approves a comprehensive plan amendment, the matter will go to the county commissioners.





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photo by Doug Conarroe