

TRANSPORTATION

Airport renovations begin



ROB BENCHLEY/The Independent

These trailers will serve as a temporary terminal at Nantucket Memorial Airport through next summer.

By PETER B. BRACE
INDEPENDENT WRITER

Air travelers using the terminal at Nantucket Memorial Airport this winter can expect to go through security in one of four double-wide trailers while the main lobby is being renovated.

The 24-foot-by-64-foot trailers, being situated on the runway ramp in front of the main terminal this week, will serve as a temporary terminal for Jet Blue, USAIR, Delta, Continental and Cape Air flights to Boston and Providence while Skanska USA of Boston, Mass. builds an addition onto the east end of the existing building and adds more office space at the parking lot side of the building.

In the next few weeks, Nantucket Airlines, Island Air and the air taxis will be moved to the annex building to the west of the terminal where Jet Blue and Continental Airlines had ticket counters last summer.

"The doublewides are being placed in position right now and they're taking a little more work," said Airport Operations Manager Al Peterson. "They are four sets of modular buildings on the ramp side of the terminal that will serve as our terminal, ticket areas and the secure holding area. The whole ticket area is going to be demolished."

The work is all part of the airport's scaled-down expansion that it plans to complete in time for the 2009 summer season. Peterson said that it will be business as usual at the airport with a few minor inconveniences as construction continues for the next 18 months or so.

"The ticket counter to the left as you come in will be closed off," Peterson said. "Nantucket Shuttle will stay where it is, the car rentals will stay where they are, and the restaurant and gift shop will be where they are."

Because building construction costs escalated to more than 30 percent above what Town Meeting voters approved in 2005 — the expenditure of \$25 million for demolition of the existing terminal and replacement with a brand new, 61,000-square-foot terminal — the Nantucket Airport Commission decided on additions and renovations to the current building totaling around 18,000 square feet and costing \$26 million. Of that money, \$9 million came from the Federal Aviation Administration, \$5 million from airport fees and \$12 million from the Massachusetts Aeronautics Commission.

The work includes building a wing off the east end of the existing main terminal facing the hangar area. When it is finished, all secure flights, including those to Boston and New York, will pass through this new wing and baggage will be screened there through the Transportation Safety Administration's new baggage screening equipment. Other additions to the building will face the parking lot off the main terminal and will free up office and ticket counter space by removing maintenance storage below the air traffic control tower and widening that part of the terminal north-

ward so all the ticket counters can be located in the same area. The parking configuration will stay the same, as will drop off and pick up.

Lawrence Lynch of Falmouth, Mass. is excavating the foundation hole for the east end addition. Also, added Peterson, the Airport Commission will attempt to get the rebuilt terminal certified by Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) through the Green Building Council.

"This is going to be a very environmentally friendly building," he said. "We are shooting for a silver LEED certification. We will be using geothermal heating and cooling systems. We are using, as much as we can, reprocessed materials and energy efficient windows and doors and meeting with National Grid to do everything we can to make it energy efficient."

By next summer's busy air travel season, the airport expects to have the east end addition built and the gift shop moved over into this new section of the terminal. The tent at that end of the building for secure departures will be set up again and the trailers will remain in use through the summer season. ■

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