

New lights to brighten landings

By JOANN BRAAM
Of The Gazette Staff

LAUREL — Aircraft will be flying out of a brighter airport here before the end of the month.

The city-run airport is getting a \$242,000 facelift and a new lighting system is a major part of the improvements. Laurel Airport Authority Chairman John Smith said work began in mid-June and should be completed within two weeks.

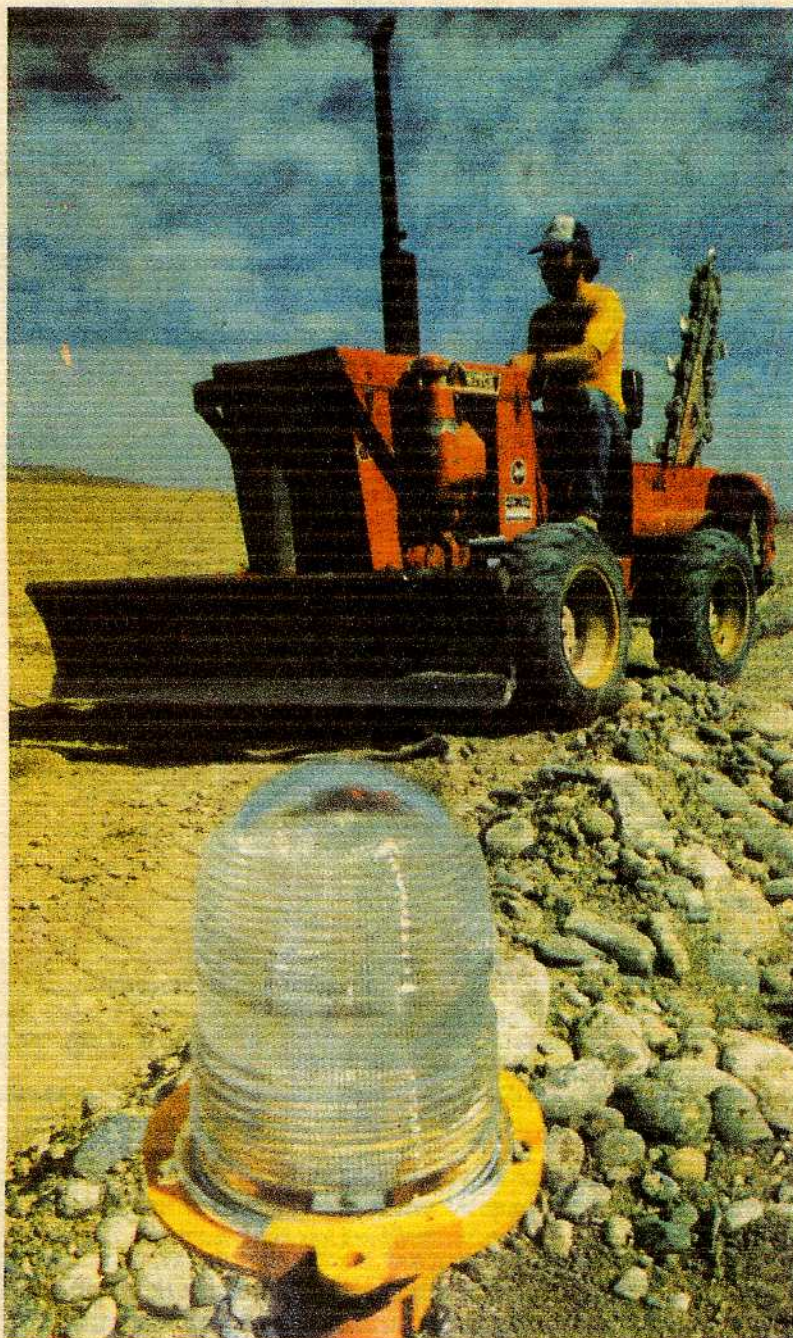
Smith said construction crews are installing a new rotating beacon and special lights to guide aircraft in upon landing at the 100-acre or so airfield. The new beacon will replace the old one which was shot out a year and a half ago, he said.

Crews are also installing new fencing, improving the airfield's drainage system and adding new taxiways and a safety area at the end of a runway. Smith said the project is financed by local and federal monies; 90 percent of the cost is borne by the federal government.

The primary contractor for the work is Long Construction Co. in Billings. The contract for electrical work was awarded to Ace Electric in Laurel.

Smith said he hopes the improvements will result in more activity at the 100-acre airfield. "We're hoping to get more pilots out here," he said.

Now, there are some 60 planes that use the airport.



Gazette photo by Larry Mayer

Paul Kercher grades ground near runway light.