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\$9 million tentative agreement reached for Rock Airport property in West Deer



By [Jodi Weigand](#)

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A tentative agreement was reached on Thursday to sell Rock Airport and Business Park in West Deer to Alaskan Property Management for \$9 million.

The company is a subsidiary of data management company Management Science Associates, a tenant of the business park.

Alaskan upped its original \$6 million offer submitted in March to pay all creditors, back taxes, administrative costs and reserve money to cover some unsecured claims.

"This buyer stepped up so that we can confidently say there is enough money," said Kirk Burkley, attorney for the bankruptcy trustee. "It would be sufficient to satisfy all liens on the property."

Bankruptcy reorganization plans submitted by Rock Airport and MSA will either be withdrawn or moot if a sale is confirmed. Though creditors favored Rock's plan, it did not receive majority support. MSA's plan was rejected.

Bankruptcy court Judge Carlotta Bohm confirmed Alaskan's bid, but the final sale confirmation won't happen until after a Sept. 4 hearing regarding ownership of the Rock-Built building, where airport manager Rock Ferrone has a business.

The bankruptcy trustee's stance is that the building is deeded to Rock Airport and therefore should be part of the sale, but Ferrone says he owns the building.

There was obvious disappointment over the pending sale among those who were advocating for Ferrone to maintain ownership of the property.

Ferrone, Rock Airport and MSA have been in civil court over numerous issues, including MSA's use of the power grid and the company's alleged defamation of Ferrone.

"They out-played us," said Robert Lampl, attorney for Rock Airport. "It's a fair and reasonable sale."

The sale agreement stipulates that Alaskan will keep Rock Airport open. Alfred Kuehn, owner of Alaskan and chairman of MSA, said in a deposition that Alaskan would hire someone to operate the airport.

Otherwise, PennDOT's Bureau of Aviation would have required repayment of \$9.3 million in grant money it gave for airport improvements.

Despite those assurances, Ferrone said he is convinced Alaskan will close the airport as soon as it acquires ownership and then challenge PennDOT's claim to the grant money.

"This is very discouraging, but we still think there's opportunity to get the Bureau (of Aviation) involved and save the airport," Ferrone said. "We're going to go to work and see if the bureau understands that this airport is at risk."

About 30 members of the Deer Lakes Pilot's Club, which is based at Rock Airport, filed into the courtroom in support of Ferrone.

"We want the airport to continue," club president John Marino told the judge. "I think everybody deserves a second chance, and I think Mr. Ferrone should be given that second chance."

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