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George Ford has spent decades covering business news across Eastern Iowa. Ford is a native of Lexington, Ky., but has [...]

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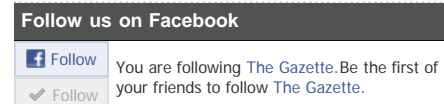
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The Eastern Iowa Airport will be getting a new parking access and revenue control system for less than what was budgeted for the project.

The Cedar Rapids Airport Commission on Monday approved purchasing new equipment from Datapark Inc. of San Leandro, Calif., for \$294,977 to replace an existing parking access and revenue control system that was installed in 2006.

Airport Director Tim Bradshaw said \$450,000 was budgeted for the capital expenditure, based on interviews with equipment providers before preparing requests for bids. Bradshaw said the airport, which will have some fiber optic cable installed for the new system, will be able to consider adding some additional features and still remain under budget.

Don Swanson, airport director of finance and administration, said staff met with representatives of Datapark and the second-lowest bidder, Amano McGann Inc. of Minneapolis, Minn., to

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The entrance to the passenger terminal at the Eastern Iowa Airport. (Kaitlyn Bernauer/The Gazette)

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review their proposals. Amano McGann bid \$558,253 for its parking access and revenue control system.

Swanson said there was a wide variation between bids, with Baker Group of Des Moines submitting a bid of \$646,854 and Zaeg America Inc. of Bloomington, Minn., bidding \$713,228 for the new system. He said Datapark sells directly to customers, whereas the other bidders sells through distributors.

Swanson said Datapark uses the same modules for different parts of its system, which reduces the overall cost, and it incorporates open source software. The latter eliminates the upfront development cost for proprietary software and also makes it easier to add technology upgrades from other vendors in the future.

"We have checked references for Datapark through Republic Parking System, which manages parking lots, and determined that the company has performed well at other airports," Swanson said.

All the bids include additional maintenance coverage for the equipment.

Separately, the airport commission approved five-year agreements with four rental car operators that will take effect April 1 and run through March 31, 2018. Swanson said total minimum annual guaranteed revenue will slip from the existing \$1.4 million to \$1.3 million due to a decline in business travel.

Rental car revenue is important because the city-owned airport does not receive property tax revenue. The airport receives 10 percent of its annual operating revenue from the rental car concession.

The first year minimum annual revenue guarantees range from \$228,435 to \$398,800. If rental car traffic picks up in later years of the contracts, the airport will receive additional revenue under the terms of the agreements.

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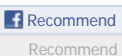
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**Kendrick Lamar**  
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