

Hickory, W-S Airport Towers to Close

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Two airport control towers that serve our area are being closed due to budget cuts in the sequester. The tower at the Hickory airport, and the tower at the Winston-Salem airport are on the list of 149 towers to be unmanned by the FAA with the cuts. There are a number of other smaller airports that are regular destinations from our area also effected, including Greenville-Spartanburg and Myrtle Beach. The towers are all part of the FAA's contract-tower program, with third-party controllers staffing towers at some small airports. The FAA will close the 149 towers over four weeks beginning on April 7. As part of its \$637 million in sequester cuts, the FAA had proposed to close 189 towers at airports with fewer than 10,000 commercial takeoffs and landings a year. But the agency recently called on airports to explain why their towers should remain open. Some 24 airports were spared through that process.