

Hickory, W-S Airport Towers to Close

Written by Steve Frank

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.