

# Unmanned Airport Control Tower Installed In Northern Colorado

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**LOVELAND, Colo. (CBS4)** — A new high-tech experiment is underway at the Northern Colorado Regional Airport that could have ramifications around the country.

The Colorado Department of Transportation Division of Aeronautics is nearing completion on the Remote Tower Project.



“It’s the first one that’s going to combine radar and track-based information with the video-based information that will come from the cameras to provide an even better situational picture of what’s happening here,” said David Ulane the Director of the CDOT Division of Aeronautics.

Three masts filled with cameras stretch along the airport in Loveland. The cameras stream into a room that acts as a virtual tower.



“We’ll have basically what looks like a video wall,” said Ulane. “When you’re standing in front of them make it look like from these cameras you’re looking out the windows of a traditional air traffic control tower cab.”

NCRA opened in the 1960s and has never had an air traffic tower. Most airports in Colorado do not. However, with more than 90,000 take off and landings, and a growing population in Norther Colorado the airport is getting busier.

“We have a lot of different types of aircraft that use this airport,” said Jason Licon, the Airport Director at NCRA. “This will help us maintain safety for all the users.”

“A more efficient facility, a safer facility and certainly one that if airline service resumes has a bigger economic impact on this community,” said Ulane.

The Division of Aeronautics has spent more than \$8 million on the remote tower project. It’s worked hand in hand with the FAA. Testing will begin in the next few weeks and last for more than a year. The hope is to have a fully operation virtual air control up and running by the end of 2020.

State officials are looking to expand the project in the future.

“We have a number of our airports in the state that could use air traffic controls services like this, even part of the year,” said Ulane. Montrose, Telluride, Hayden, Durango and Gunnison are some of the airports with commercial service and no air traffic control tower.

In Loveland, the hope is the new technology could return commercial service there.

“It will allow additional traffic to come in in a safe way. As we grow over time it will continue to be able to accommodate that growth,” said Licon. “Having a safe airport is critical to market to those airlines.”

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