

Grant money helps museum plans

The National Museum of World War II Aviation in Colorado Springs received a \$40,000 planning grant from the Anna Keesling Ackerman Fund.

The fund, overseen by the El Pomar Foundation, is the first major grant for the museum, which is seeking \$500,000 to develop detailed plans and budgets to raise the estimated \$12 million to \$15 million needed for construction.

The museum site is in the northeast corner of the Colorado Springs Airport adjacent to the west runway.

“We consider the financial support of El Pomar Foundation critical in setting the stage for fundraising activities, and we appreciate their confidence in our plans,” said Bill Klaers, co-chairman of the museum’s board and president of WestPac Restorations, an aircraft restoration company specializing in World War II planes that has restored several of the aircraft to be displayed in the museum.

The museum, which would showcase how American air power helped win World War II, is the brainchild of Jim Fry, a Minneapolis businessman and aviation buff who in 2005 selected Colorado Springs as the site because of the area’s extensive military presence and history.

Construction is expected to begin by 2012, depending on fundraising.

THE GAZETTE