

Airport eyes business venture

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MT. VERNON — The Mt. Vernon Airport shop has started selling and installing new transponder technology as a revenue generator, said Airport Director Chris Collins.

By Jan. 1, 2020, a large number of aircraft will be required to have ADS-B technology installed.

ADS-B stands for Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast and it gives pilots valuable information on other aircraft in the sky, hazardous weather conditions and more.

“It’s a way for planes to see one another and by 2020 they want (most) airplanes to have the technology in the cockpit to where they can see one another electronically,”

Collins said.

“The airport shop will now sell and install this technology, which means more revenue for the airport and possibly some job creation, Collins said Tuesday to the Mt. Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners.

“Our shop has been seeking dealerships with the various suppliers of this equipment to kind of capture this market that’s

out there,” Collins said. “And I think only about 15 percent of the aircraft owners have made this upgrade.”

Details were not available on how much revenue this venture may generate.

Also on Tuesday, Collins said the airport has reduced its SRT line service staff by one person due to declining fuel sales. Line service staff provide

different services such as pumping fuel, directing planes and loading cargo.

“Our fuel sales have really fallen off and to kind of curb the expenses we’ve reduced staff,” Collins said. “The revenues just aren’t there.”

In addition Tuesday, the Airport Board discussed how the airport will host a Day Camp for Cub Scouts for one week this summer. The tentative

dates for the camp are June 12 to 16.

The idea is the Scouts will do traditional scouting activities in the morning and then do some aviation activities in the afternoon. The hope is about 50 Scouts from around the region will attend the camp.

“We’re always trying to do something to generate family activities,” Collins said.