

Airport to purchase new FBO phone system

The fixed-base operator (FBO) at the Mt. Vernon Outland Airport currently communicates with only a single cell phone

BY EMILY ROTH

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MT. VERNON— The Mt. Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners voted on Tuesday night to pursue a bid from Camden Communications to replace the fixed-base operator (FBO) telephone system.

Currently the FBO is operating with a single cell phone, an aspect which Airport Director Chris Collins has sought to fix.

"When the airport ran the FBO... which ceased in 1999 I believe, sometime back in the past there

was a comm dial system bought and installed giving the airport director the ability to hit a button and the phone would ring at the service desk, a phone would ring at the maintenance superintendent's office and everything was interconnected," Collins said.

"Around 2000, they ceased having that connectivity. Somehow, I don't know if that did it, but those phones over there have been deteriorating ever since. All the time I've been here, we thought it was

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the lines between the buildings. Fast forward to about two months ago, they completely lost all of their phones over there at the FBO building. Now they are communicating with a cell phone. One single cell phone line is all they have."

Collins informed the board that a representative from AT&T examined the phone lines to discover that the problem was with the phones which were purchased in the late 1980s.

Collins continued to state that a new phone system was required in the FBO building. AT&T will no longer be able to service the phone lines due to the company's switch to VoIP (voice over Internet protocol) technology, as the current phone systems require a traditional land line. Charter and Clearwave Communications are capable of providing the telephone lines, but Collins looked for a lower fee.

"From what I've been told, [the FBO doesn't] have a strong enough Internet signal over there to use a VoIP system at this time," said Collins. "So we need the old hard wired telephone that all of us know."

Mark Sheets who has previously worked on airport communication issues gave the airport a quote for installing four phones, as did Camden Communications and Megabytes Technology Services. The phones are hybrid, as they are compatible with both traditional land lines and VoIP, should the airport later convert to the newer system.

"Image a situation where the one guy who has the one phone that's working is out fueling an airplane and a military call comes in or part of a flight comes in and it goes to voicemail, that's a really poor situation to be in," said Collins.

Systems will be able to be

installed within a week. Collins recommended pursuing the lowest bid, which was with Camden Communications at \$2,141.92.

The meeting was conducted after holding a moment of silence for the Gutzler family who died following a private airplane crash on Jan. 2 in southwest Kentucky. The plane was headed to Mt. Vernon from Key West, Fla. Marty Gutzler, 49, Kimberly Gutzler, 45, their daughter, Piper Gutzler, 9 and their niece, Sierra Wilder, all of Nashville, died as a result of injuries sustained in the crash. The lone survivor of the crash was Sailor Gutzler, 7.

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Sentinel Photo/EMILY ROTH

NEW BUSINESS — The Mt. Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners discussed the installation of a new phone system during their regular meeting Tuesday night at the Mt. Vernon Outland Airport. The meeting was conducted after holding a moment of silence for the Gut-zler family of Nashville.