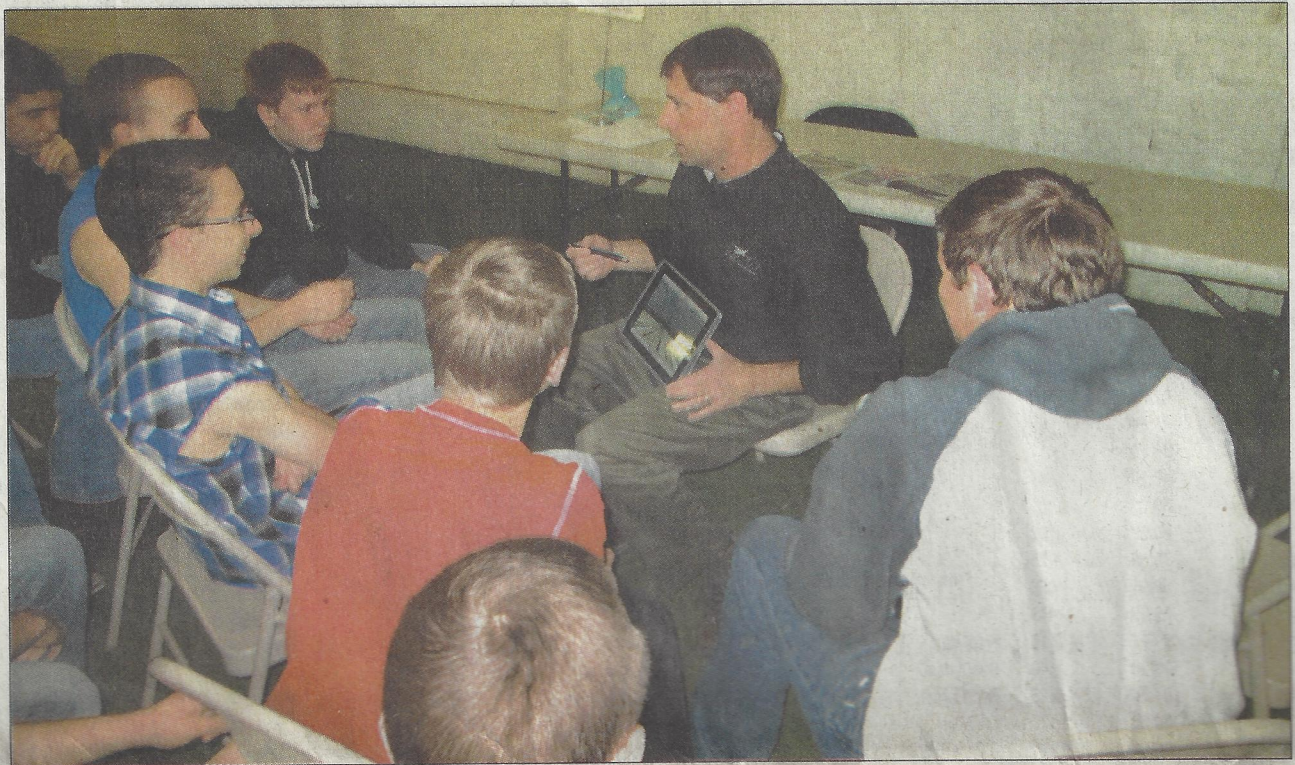


AIR TRAVEL DISCUSSION



Sentinel Photo/DAVID BELCHER

Chris Collins, Mt. Vernon Outland Airport manager, discusses the air travel business with area students Friday at a career fair at Mt. Vernon Township High School.

MVTHS Career Fair offers insight into various job opportunities

Air Travel, Career Discussion, Farm Careers among topics

BY DAVID BELCHER

MT. VERNON LIFESTYLES EDITOR

MT. VERNON — Finding a career all comes down to a simple formula:

“What do you enjoy doing? Find a career doing that and get paid for it.”

That is the advice Monte Jo Clark, Spring Garden Grade School superintendent, offered to students during a Regional Office of Education/Rend Lake Area Regional Delivery System Career Fair on Friday at Mt. Vernon Township High School. The event was attended by about 1,300 eighth-, ninth- and 12th-grade students from Hamilton and Jefferson counties, according to Kara

Andrew, RLARDS director.

Booths manned by professionals giving a thumbnail sketch of their job filled L Building on the MVTHS campus.

Andrews described it as “speed dating meets career fair.”

An alert system was set on a 10 minute loop: Each session began with 7 1/2 minutes of presentation. At the “1-minute remains” warning, presenters wrapped up and students asked questions. Ninety seconds of music was played to signify the end of that presentation and the countdown to the start of the next presentation.

As a result, Andrews said, students had the opportunity to speedily “date” about six careers that they are potentially interested in pursuing.

“I tell them to keep watch because occupations are changing over time and an occupation they might like may be totally different in four to six years.” Dottie

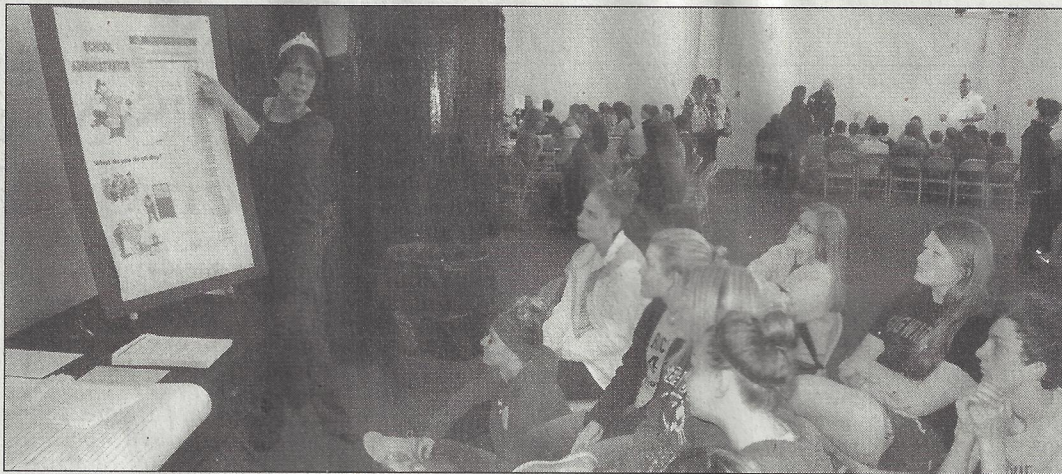
Johnson, Bethel Grade School eighth-grade teacher, said.

Bob White is an insurance salesman. However, he enthusiastically credited the U.S. Army for playing a critical role in his success. He said his military experience reinforced what his dad taught him, “Don’t give up. A winner never quits and a quitter never wins.”

“I just hope that the eighth-grade and freshmen students really start to think about what profession they may wish to pursue,” Andrews said. “There are so many course offerings at the high school level that could result in a student graduating with not just a diploma in hand but also with college credits and/or actual certifications in vocational programs that can lead directly into a profession or into the next level of courses at the college level.

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Sentinel Photo/DAVID BELCHER

CAREER DISCUSSION — About 1,300 students from Hamilton and Jefferson counties came to Mt. Vernon Township High School's L Building Friday for a Regional Office of Education/Rend Lake Area Regional Delivery System Career Fair. Professionals like Monte Jo Clark, Spring Garden Grade School superintendent, gave students a thumbnail sketch of their job.

Career:

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"The sooner these kids know what type of profession they want to go in to the better they will be able to take advantage of the high school vocational courses that result in valuable dual credits (meaning they get college credits from taking high school courses) and actual certifications that can lead directly into jobs straight out of high school.

"If they utilize these high school programs to jump-start their careers, they can save themselves, and their parents, lots of time and money."

In looking at what young people should bear in mind when career shopping, she said, "I think that the trick to finding the right career is figuring out what would be challenging, interesting and fulfilling for many years to come. This, of course, is different for each student. When I was a guidance counselor, I spent a lot of time having my students take interest inventories to try to hone in on what they really liked and what occupations that could translate into.

"Sometimes it was easy and kids knew from birth that they



Sentinel Photo/DAVID BELCHER

FARM CAREERS — Paul Schuette, Illinois Farm Bureau Region 4 manager, discusses farm careers with area students Friday during the career fair at Mt. Vernon Township High School.

wanted to be something specific and other times students needed extra time and energy investing into them to find out what really made them tick and what profession would keep them ticking well into their futures."

Andrews said she wanted to thank the presenters who donated their time to help the young people.

"I just simply adore these presenters. Each year I am

blown away by the local business people and servicemen/women who are so willing to be a part of this fair. I put this career fair together with very few funds, so these presenters don't get a lot of perks from this, but year after year, they show up with glowing smiles on their faces. I simply cannot put into words how very much I appreciate each and every one of them."

mtvlife@morningsentinel.com