

Flying Fortress to make King City landing

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MT. VERNON — Later this summer, King City will have an opportunity to take a flight back in time when the Arizona Wing Commemorative Air Force Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress "Sentimental Journey" takes a special trip to Mt. Vernon Outland Airport.

According to Airport Manager Chris Collins, the AWCAF is a "flying museum" and the B-17 is a relic of and reminder of a momentous period in American history.

"The B-17 was one of the most significant bombers during World War II," Collins said. "To me personally, this is about our World War II veterans. They aren't going to be forever and I read [somewhere] that we are losing 1,500 World War II veterans each day. It's important that we honor these guys and to bring out this plane is a great

opportunity to listen to the stories of the guys that were in them."

The last time the Flying Fortress made an appearance in Mt. Vernon, Collins explained, was in 1999 and while the arrival of the B-17 will no doubt draw visitors from all over the area, the issue is the price of fuel.

The appearance fee for the event, he said, is 800 gallons of fuel and overnight accommodations. Drury Inn of Mt. Vernon has already offered to host the guests but with the price of gasoline at an all-time high, it will take at least \$4,000 "to pull this off," Collins said.

Donations have already been pouring in - a little more than \$1,000 has been collected - and sponsorships for the event, Collins explained, are available.

"The board sees the significance of having this event as a promotion of the airport, the



Submitted Photo/Arizona Commemorative Air Force Museum

READY FOR LANDING — The "Sentimental Journey" will make a trip to Mt. Vernon Outland Airport this August for a special event. The Boeing B-17 bomber has not made an appearance in the area since 1999.

city of Mt. Vernon and Jefferson County," Collins said. "Whatever the shortfall, the airport will cover it."

The event will be held Friday, Aug. 15 through Monday, Aug. 18.

"To have them here from Friday to Monday is a rare appearance," Collins said. "In the past it has always been throughout the week and this

way there is potential of more people seeing it."

According to the Arizona Commemorative Air Force, there were more than 12,000 B-17s built but only 50 are known to still exist.

For more information on the event or to donate, persons can contact Collins at 242-7016.

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