

Chairman Ancona gives State of the Airport

In the past year, Mt. Vernon Outland Airport has achieved statewide recognition and started a new capital development project

BY EMILY ROTH

SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

MT. VERNON — Mt. Vernon Outland Airport Chairman Mike Ancona gave the annual State of the Airport address on Wednesday during the full meeting of the Board of Commissioners, declaring Fiscal Year 2015-16 a successful one.

Highlights included awards, events hosted, a fiscal report, and a capital development report.

"All in all it was a pretty good year I would say," stated Ancona. "I know that our airport director and his staff work very hard to make all of this come alive and happen. I for one having been around since I was 14 years old have seen the airport

up and down several times. I'm here to tell you that this is truly a hallmark, and it's been a hallmark or four or five years, six years maybe. It's just exciting to see the airport doing so well."

Ancona noted that the airport was named the 2015 Illinois General Aviation Airport of the year by the Illinois Department of Transportation Division of Aeronautics last May. The airport was also awarded the honor in 2007.

"That's probably about as rare a thing to happen in the State of Illinois that I know of," said Ancona, "to get that honor twice in that short a period of time."

Airport:

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He also added that the annual Salute to Freedom Celebration was enhanced in 2015 due to a visit by the Experimental Aircraft Association's (EAA) Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress "Aluminum Overcast." "Aluminum Overcast" provided a background for a celebration honoring the Greatest Generation on July 3. A total of 26 World War II veterans attended the ceremony and were photographed in front of the bomber.

With the signing of a lease agreement in late July, the Koziara Terminal no longer has any vacancies. Two Girls Cheesecakes and Desserts leased the last vacant suite, adjacent to the airport administrative offices. The last time the terminal was at 100 percent occupancy was in the late 1970s when the building was smaller.

The Annual Aviation Report

released in February showed total operations at 27,270, up from the previous year at 24,190. The 11.3 percent increase was attributed to increased jet, cargo, and training activities as well as the many aviation events held at the airport. Based tenancy remains at 51 aircraft.

In February, the airport embarked on a capital development plan titled Momentum 2020. Momentum 2020 will implement FAA mandated projects, increase storage capacity, and further the revitalization of airport areas that will be needed for future economic development.

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Sentinel Photo/EMILY ROTH

STATE OF THE AIRPORT — Mt. Vernon Outland Airport Authority Board of Commissioners Chairman Mike Ancona, **CENTER**, discusses the state of the airport with the board on Tuesday. Ancona declared fiscal year 2015/2016 a successful one for the airport.