

Airport named top in state

Mt. Vernon Outland Airport named 2015 Airport of the Year

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MT. VERNON — For the second time this decade, the Mt.

Vernon Outland Airport has received Airport of the Year honors.

The award, presented by the Illinois Department of Transportation Division of Aeronautics, presented the award Thursday at the 2015 Illinois Aviation Conference in Rockford.

The airport received the General Aviation Airport of the Year award previously in 2007. Other recent honors include the Governor's Hometown Award presented in December for the Jefferson County Hall of Honor and Col. R.D. White Veterans Museum based in the Kozaria Terminal and the

Governor's Volunteer Service Award, which was presented to the airport in April.

"We are very grateful for this honor," said Airport Director Chris Collins. "The dedication to this facility and to the community by the staff, tenants and volunteers is extraordinary and has been recognized

statewide as evidenced by these awards."

The award is presented based on cooperation with IDOT and Federal Aviation Administration officials, the airport safety record, service to the local community and

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general maintenance of the facility.

"I feel this award is an extension of our outreach to the national aviation industry and to the local community," said Mike Ancona, airport board chairman. "Few airports host as many events and are as welcoming to residents. The team always has the welcome mat displayed."

Some of those events include U.S. military airlifts, the Plane & Pilot Midwest LSA Expo, the Salute to Freedom, EAA Young Eagle flights, YMCA programs, RC boat racing, weddings, civic club meetings, first responder training, veterans events, the EAA Airventure Cup Race, Balloons Over Mt. Vernon, aircraft type club events, 4-H programs of the University

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of Illinois Extension Service, school tours and field trips, tent revivals, the Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce Home Show, and IEMA and JCMA classes.

Mt. Vernon Mayor Mary Jane Chesley said the award is an exciting thing for the airport and the area.

"They have done it again," Chesley said. "They have worked very hard at the airport, and they have been officially recognized for their hard work by being named the 2015 Airport of the Year."

Those who were on hand to receive the award included Collins, Ancona, board vice chairman Greg Martin, secretary Eddie Lee and treasurer Gary Chesney.