

Airport gives last preschool tour

During May, the Mt. Vernon Outland Airport provides tours to Jefferson County preschoolers

BY EMILY ROTH
SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

MT. VERNON — Throughout the month of May, Jefferson County preschoolers have had the opportunity to tour the Mt. Vernon Outland Airport, with tours concluding on Tuesday.

On Tuesday morning Airport Director Chris Collins brought students and their parents throughout the airport, including locations such as the terminal, flightline, and various hangars.

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Sentinel Photo/EMILY ROTH

PILOT'S SEAT — Kenadie Bigham, 5, of Bluford sits in the cockpit of a private plane at the Mt. Vernon Outland Airport on Tuesday. Bigham was part of a preschool tour group exploring the airport.

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"This is basically an introductory tour to the airport," stated Collins. "As you can see there are just as many parents as there are kids, and I kind of aim for both groups. This has been going on all during the month of May, at least Tuesdays and Thursdays, but we've actually done some Mondays and Fridays. It all depends on their schedule."

Though tours have been given at the airport before, Collins indicated that the schools provide a larger group than usual. Over the month, 300 students across 10 schools have toured the airport. Children ranged from ages 3 through 5.

"This is the first time that we've done it to this scale," Collins said. "Usually we'll do one or two tours a month, but this time it's all the pre-Ks all over the county."

Before the tour, students made airplane-shaped magnets and name tags. They brought the magnets home as a souvenir and placed the

name tags on an airport wall to create a mural.

"We start out going out onto the flightline and something as simple as showing them the barn swallows that we have here at the airport which is really unique because not everywhere has those," informed Collins. "We usually go over to one of the big hangars across the parking lot. I try to vary it every time. This time we're going to go to the center hangar, I'm going to let them sit in one of the airplanes. I can't do that every time, but this time I've arranged for it, so we're going to sit in an airplane."

The trip was spearheaded by Susan Staples of District 80, and April Rubenacker, and Jenny Hicks, parent advocates.

"We've had a great tour every time by Chris or Sheila [Scrivner]," said Rubenacker. "We plan fun and educational programs every month for both the kids and their parents. We know that the earlier you're involved with your children, the more successful they will be in school."

eroth@morningsentinel.com

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