

'Sharky' booked for balloon event

Balloons Over Mt. Vernon and EAA announce partnership

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MT. VERNON — As the Balloons Over Mt. Vernon event continues to grow, the group is now partnering with the Experimental Aircraft Association to incorporate the Little Egypt Fly-In and Veterans Reunion into one event.

Balloons Over Mt. Vernon and Fly-In 2015 will be held Oct. 16 through 18 at the Mt. Vernon Outland Airport.

"The mission of Balloons Over Mt. Vernon and Fly-in is to promote the general love and education of aviation while giving back to the community, and that is exactly what we plan to do with a weekend full of activities," said Jennifer Witzel, one of the organizers of the event.

"Sharky" is the special shape announced for the event, which is being sponsored by RARE Chophouse.

"Who knew sharks could fly," Witzel joked.

Tethered balloons will be available for rides, thanks to Country Financial, and on Friday

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evening, the United Way Balloon Glow will be presented by Flo Gas.

"Flo Gas have been great to work with the past two years by providing the propane for the balloons for the event, so we really want to thank them this year by having them recognized," Witzel said. In addition, RARE is partnering with organizers to provide VIP seating for the Balloon Glow.

The fly-in portion of the program is also underway.

"We are in the works to have several World War I and World War II airplanes on display," Witzel stated. "We have the World War I Curtis Jenn, P51 Mustang, and PV2 Harpoon joining us. The P51 Mustang will be selling rides. ... As part of the Fly-in, we are inviting anyone who would like to fly their plane in for breakfast and the event to join us. Airplane pilots will fly many a mile for a good pancake."

Military equipment and aircraft will also be on display during the weekend, and a show-

case for the veterans and the Hall of Fame at the airport is planned. Sponsorship packages for the military planes is being sought at this time.

Another event which is planned for Saturday morning is the US Bank Duck Drop.

"This will be a show to see in itself," Witzel said. "During the morning flight, the YMCA will hold a 'run with the balloons' around the pond at the airport. For all the race enthusiasts, this will be a race like no other. After the balloon flight, attendees won't want to miss the United Way pancake breakfast."

Young Eagle Rides will be available on Saturday, the St. Louis Remote Control Boat Club will be at the pond with demonstrations, the Tri-County Aviation Education Zone and a veterans reunion recognizing those who have served will be held as well as inflatables for kids, vendors/crafters, sponsor booths and family-friendly activities.

For information about flight line sponsorships, hot air sponsorships and flying high sponsorships, contact Witzel at 322-4652 or Sheila at 242-7016 for details. 5/20/15