



Sentinel Photo/EMILY ROTH

THINKING OF A SOLUTION — Airport Director Chris Collins informs the Mt. Vernon Outland Airport Board of Commissioners on Tuesday that last week a freezer at Wilkey's Cafe shut down. The board is currently looking into ways in which they can help restaurant owner Don Wilkey after the freezer caused Wilkey to lose perishable inventory.

Cooler malfunctions at Wilkey's Cafe

A shut down freezer caused restaurant owner Don Wilkey to lose food inventory

BY EMILY ROTH

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MT. VERNON — One week ago Wilkey's Cafe at the Mt. Vernon Outland Airport lost a large amount of perishable inventory due to a freezer failure.

While the exact amount for the moment is remaining undisclosed, Airport Director Chris Collins informed the Mt. Vernon Outland Airport Board of Commissioners on Tuesday, "Donnie Wilkey lost a large amount of inventory. We had a cooler fail outside and he asked if there was anything that we could do for him on this."

According to Collins, no in-

surance coverage is available for the loss of food due to previous claims by the airport.

"It's an unfortunate loss," continued Collins. "We did buy new walk-in coolers and when the Moose Lodge had their auction back in the winter we bought a new walk-in cooler just for this because these two units that are outside are old. We do have the new ones here; we just haven't had time to put them in yet."

Rather than installing a new cooler into the restaurant, Collins suggested fitting two deep freezers into the current space.

"I think we could be looking at an extreme amount of cost retro-fitting that new cooler in there," added Collins. "...We already have a cooler in there. With two plug-in deep freezes in there, he would be set. You're looking at a lot of cost with removing a wall and putting the outside units up on the roof

and then the plumbing and everything down to it."

Collins advised for the board to consider the options and they would resume discussion during July's full board meeting. In the previous week, the freezer was reportedly working Sunday night when the restaurant closed and had shut down by Tuesday. The food was found to be around 40 degrees and unable to be served.

If the airport board does decide not to use the new cooler, Wilkey indicated that he believes he can sell the new cooler for added funds within two weeks. The cooler has since been repaired. Board Chairman Mike Ancona advised newly appointed Commissioner Ryan Wellmaker to discuss the issue with Wilkey and discover what he needs to fully run the restaurant.

"We want to help him; he's family to us," said Collins.

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