

AirVenture comes to Mt. Vernon

Race event will take flight July 21

BY TRAVIS MORSE
travis.morse@register-news.com

MT. VERNON — Hopes are high that this year's EAA AirVenture Cup Race will be a great success for Mt. Vernon Outland Airport and the community.

The airport will host more than 100 airplanes for the event, planned for July 21 to 23. That includes 92 racing planes and 10 to 15 support aircraft. There are about 32 more planes expected this year than were at the last race

in Mt. Vernon two years ago.

"We have 58 parking tees on the concrete so my math says there's going to be airplanes in places that don't normally have airplanes," said Airport Director Chris Collins. "It's going to be exciting, could be the biggest thing we've done in many years."

EAA stands for the Experimental Aircraft Association. The AirVenture Cup Race will go from Mt. Vernon Airport to Wausau Downtown Airport in Wausau, Wis.

Mt. Vernon Airport hosted the event for the first time in 2013. From then on, Mt. Vernon has been the host in odd years while Mitchell, S.D., is

"It's going to be exciting, could be the biggest thing we've done in many years."

**Airport Director
Chris Collins**

the host in even years.

The event can be a big boost for local tourism, drawing pilots, racing staff, mechanics and the general public, airport officials said.

SEE RACE PAGE 3A

RACE

AirVenture comes to Mt. Vernon

FROM PAGE 1A

Collins said he's not sure how many people from the general public will attend but he hopes it's a lot. Those who come will get to see the airport at work and can help make the visiting pilots feel welcome.

"A simple handshake and a 'glad you're here' can go a long way," Collins said.

Pilots for the race will begin arriving in Mt. Vernon on the afternoon

of Friday, July 21, and the arrivals will continue into that evening.

Then on Saturday, July 22, there will be a day-long open house where the public can talk to all the racers and see the planes. The open house lasts from about 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Also on Saturday, there will be free EAA Young Eagle plane rides for kids from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The rides are available to children ages 8 to 17, but parent/guardian permission is required.

The race itself begins on the morning of Sunday, July 23, as the aircraft will take off from Mt. Vernon and journey to Wausau, Wis. The tentative start time is 9 a.m.

According to Collins, Mt.

Vernon was chosen for the AirVenture Cup Race because of its hospitality industry, the airport's infrastructure, and the volunteers who make sure all the visitors' needs are met.

"It's amazing what a simple free bottle of water will do," Collins said. "Our volunteers are totally bought in on meeting the needs of our guests." Collins said when he visits events elsewhere, he's often approached by exhibitors and pilots who praise Mt. Vernon for being friendly and welcoming.

"I'm very proud of the volunteers that we have here," Collins said.

For more information on the race, visit www.airventurecuprace.com.

7-16-17