

De/Anti ice truck donated to Mt. Vernon Airport

New truck designed to de-ice larger aircraft

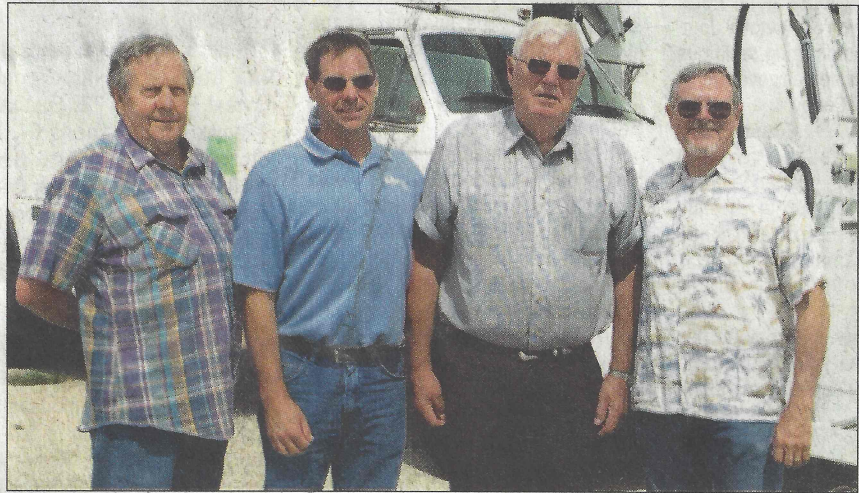
BY SHAWN SINGLETON
SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

MT. VERNON — Mt. Vernon Outland Airport now has a state of the art De/Anti Ice Truck thanks to the generosity of a Morris-based businessman.

Bennie Helland, owner of Newark Truck and Tractor, donated the truck, which is designed to de-ice larger cargo aircraft landing at the airport.

Said MVAA Chairman Mike Ancona, "I can't thank Bennie Helland enough for his generous donation. The airport can now expand its services to large aircraft during all winter conditions."

Mt. Vernon Airport Director Chris Collins, his father Ernie and MVAA Vice Chairman Eddie Lee drove the truck from Morris to Mt. Vernon last week.



Sentinel Photo/SHAWN SINGLETON

MT. VERNON AIRPORT GETS A NEW TRUCK — FROM LEFT, Ernie Collins, Mt. Vernon Outland Airport Volunteer; Chris Collins, Airport Director; Bennie Helland, owner of Newark Truck & Tractor of Morris and Eddie Lee, MVAA Vice Chairman, stand next to a new de-icing truck recently donated to the airport. Helland donated to the airport, which is designed to de-ice larger cargo aircraft.

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The 1997 Trump 2000 De-Anti Ice Truck is built on a Ford F-700 Chassis. The truck features an independent hydraulic/heating system powered by a separate six cylinder engine located in the rear compartment. Three on-board tanks store 1400 gallons of Type I De-Ice Fluid and 600 gallons of Type IV Anti-Ice Fluid. The truck's boom extends to 41 feet and its platform includes separate nozzles for both types of fluids.

"There should never be an aircraft at Mt. Vernon that is too large for this truck and our crew to handle," Collins said.

Collins added the need for a new truck arose last winter when the airport realized it needed better de-icing capabilities to avoid losing cargo contracts to other airports like Lambert International in St. Louis. The potential loss in revenue for both the cargo companies and the airport called for an immediate solution.

"We did not have the icing capability for the airport until last winter," Collins said. "We're problem-solvers at the airport, however.

"We had bucket truck we converted into a de-icing truck."

Though the problem was solved in the immediate, a more long-term solution had to be put in place, so Collins took the issue to the Mt. Vernon Airport Board.

"The MVAA Board of Commissioners gave me approval to seek a larger, more equipped De/Anti Ice Truck after last season," Collins said. "Although our current De-Ice truck was adequate for smaller aircraft, larger aircraft such as the DC9 or B737 our cargo operators utilize would have presented challenges."

Through various aviation relationships — and a little luck — the perfect truck materialized at Newark Truck and Tractor just outside of Morris.

"Bennie Helland, owner of Newark Truck and Tractor, had acquired two De-Anti Ice Trucks from the Fed-Ex Ramp at O'Hare Airport [in Chicago] a few years ago," Collins said. "One unit ended up at the Morris Municipal Airport.

"I reached out to Morris Airport Director Jeff Vogen and he notified me that Bennie still had the sister unit. Upon contacting Bennie, I explained our de-icing difficulties at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport. Since Bennie is a lifelong aviator and airport supporter, he has a qualified perspective. He said 'I would like to help you.'"

Collins continued the fortuitous meeting with Vogen led to the meeting with Helland which led to the acquisition of the truck.

"It was a combination of being in the right place at the right time, and knowing the right people," Collins said. "I guess the story I told was very convincing because they offered to help."

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