

Mt. Vernon Outland Airport to host cross country race

The Air Venture Cup Race will begin in Mt. Vernon and end in Oshkosh, Wis.

BY EMILY ROTH

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MT. VERNON — In 2015 the Mt. Vernon Outland Airport will once again host the Air Venture Cup Race, having previously hosted it in 2013.

Chris Collins, airport director, announced during Monday night's airport board meeting that the airport was selected as the venue for the race on July 17 over Dayton, Ohio. It is the country's fastest cross country air race.

"It's a huge deal, 60 to 75 airplanes, over 50 of them racing," said Collins. "Lots of hotel rooms, lots of meals, lots of shopping, lots of transportation. That right there is one of the things that won it for us. It's a big deal for the airport and the community to host something like this. There's only one starting point, there's only one ending point."

The Air Venture Cup traditionally has a starting point in Mitchell, S.D. in even years and Dayton, Ohio, in odd years.

Due to Mt. Vernon's past experience with hosting the race in 2013, race officials were impressed with the airport as a venue and the hospi-



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ACTING AS HOST — Mt. Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners Chairman Mike Ancona, LEFT, and Airport Direct Chris Collins, RIGHT, discuss the benefits of hosting the Air Venture Cup Race in 2015 during Tuesday night's meeting.

talities of the city.

"They'll arrive on Friday, Saturday would be an open house day to kind of meet the racers, see the airplanes, mingle," stated Collins. "Probably will be a mini race on Saturday and then on Sunday will be the full blown race to Oshkosh, [Wis.]"

Collins stated that officials have been contemplating a new venue and he suggested Mt. Vernon, anticipating a possibility to host in 2017 rather than 2015. Dayton reportedly provided logistical problems for the pilots due to the need of having to fly around Chicago and the

rough weather the planes encountered. There was also the need for multiple hotel rooms, which caused race officials to look due south for a new starting point.

"It's a tremendous honor for the airport and for our community to be selected for that," said Collins. "To bring that home to our state is a big deal. We want to work with the city, and the Chamber of Commerce, and the Economic Development and everybody to try to make sure that we do whatever we can to get those odd numbered years. I'll be reaching out to those guys pretty soon."

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