

AIRPORT events planned

Balloons Over Mt. Vernon & Fly-In set for Oct. 16

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MT. VERNON — Hot air balloons, war birds will be filling the skies at the Mt. Vernon Outland Airport for the Balloons Over Mt. Vernon & Fly-In.

"This year, I think people will notice the biggest change — bringing back the Little Egypt Fly-in to the event," said Jennifer Witzel, event coordinator. "Bringing back the aircraft piece is big."

The airport will be the setting for a weekend of activities Oct. 16 through 18 — a compliment to the Fall Fest with activities slated for the downtown area.

"The mission of Balloons Over Mt. Vernon & Fly-in is to promote the general love and education of aviation while giving back to the community," information on the event states.

"Our goal is also to keep it a free event and make it something everyone can attend and have a little something to give back to the community through civic groups and nonprofits that partner with us," Witzel said. "By having the balloons and programs sponsored we keep it free. We also try to keep our sponsorships down so even small businesses can sponsor a balloon as well."

Friday night will be the kick-off of the event, with the United Way Balloon Glow. Eighteen balloons will light up the night sky. Gates open at 4 p.m. with the glow at 6 p.m. United Way of South Central Illinois agencies will be spotlighted with family-oriented activity booths. VIP seating will be available through a sponsorship by RARE Chophouse. Ticket holders will get preferred seating

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for the glow in a hanger, appetizers prepared by RARE chefs and a cash bar. Tickets are \$50 per person and must be purchased in advance. The restaurant is also sponsoring the featured shape balloon, "Sharky" which is 140 foot tall.

Saturday morning kicks off with the YMCA of Jefferson County 5K Run/Walk "Run with the Balloons." Participants will be watching the hot air balloons take part in the US Bank Duck Drop, another special sight for the event.

The United Way will host a fundraising pancake breakfast with surprises for attendees. Aviators are encouraged to fly-in for the breakfast.

Young Eagle rides will be given from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday for children ages 8 to 17 years old.

Also Saturday, the St. Louis Remote Control Boats will be taking float all day on the pond.

New this year is the "Cruise to Balloons" for those who own a classic car and those who enjoy seeing them. Cars will gather at Times Square Mall to be escorted at 10 a.m. to the airport for display. Prizes will be given to the top three exhibitors and other surprises will be given to classic car enthusiasts.

Mt. Vernon Rotary is sponsoring a ping pong ball drop at 10 a.m. Rotary members will sell ping pong ball chances to win a hot air balloon ride.

The Tri-County Electric Aviation Education Zone will be open from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The zone features balloons, flight simulators, pilots and more.

A salute to veterans

will be held at 2 p.m. on Saturday.

The day will conclude with the Crossroads Community Hospital Survivor Flight.

All weekend long, Country Financial will

sponsor tethered balloon rides for \$10. Vendors, crafters, inflatables and family friendly events will be hosted.

Sunday morning will wrap up with a flight from the airport. 8-20-15