

“Motorcycles in the sky” making appearance at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport this weekend

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MT. VERNON — The “motorcycles in the sky” will be winging their way around the Mt. Vernon Outland Airport this weekend as gyroplane enthusiasts from the St. Louis Popular Rotorcraft Association Chapter 35 meet for their annual Fly-In.

Larry Miller, of Centralia, was the organizer for last year’s Fly-In at the airport and member of the association, said last year was the first time they had met in Mt. Vernon.

The group formerly met in Shelbyville, but Miller said when they visited the Mt. Vernon Outland Airport, they were welcomed with open arms.

“We are in love with the Mt. Vernon Airport,” Miller said.

Miller said the Fly-In is to inform the public about the gyroplane and to try to alleviate some of the stigma surrounding the aircraft.

“The stigma is that the



The annual Popular Rotorcraft Association Chapter 35 Fly-In will bring together gyroplane enthusiasts from around the state. The aircraft is sometimes called the “motorcycle in the sky” and is a sport growing in popularity.

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gyrocopter is unsafe,” he said. “In the past 10 years, they have really progressed to be the safest aircraft in the air. They are so addictive and they are so exciting.”

Miller pointed out the gyroplane, also called a gyrocopter, is an experimental aircraft, but those who fly it have to have a light sport pilot license as mandated by the

Federal Aviation Administration.

“You don’t take something like this and go out and start flying,” Miller said. “The more people are trained before they

jump into them, the better.”

The gyrocopter was invented by Igor Benson after World War II, Miller said.

The aircraft uses thrust

from a propeller driven by an engine to move the plane forward. The air coming in from under the free-spinning rotor blade makes them rotate and produce lift called “autorotation,” which means they turn on their own.

Miller said the autorotation is kind of like watching a maple seed as it spins through the air.

Miller said the aircraft is called the poor mans helicopter and it is also small enough it can land in tight spaces in a case of emergency.

He said the aircraft are easy to build with kits that can be put together or a person can design their own.

“We are just trying to get the word out to people and see who is interested,” Miller said. “It’s a growing sport.”

The Fly-In will start around 8 a.m., Aug. 25 and 26 at the airport. Miller said there were about 150 people who attended last year’s event and hopes there will be more this year. 8-24-12