

# Airport to welcome Balloons Over Mt. Vernon

*Mt. Vernon Outland Airport to host circus on Sunday, balloons in October*

**BY EMILY ROTH**  
SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

**MT. VERNON** — After finishing the LSA (Light Sport Aircraft) Expo, Mt. Vernon Outland Airport is gearing up for more events: the Carson and Barnes Circus and Balloons Over Mt. Vernon.

The preparation for both events was discussed during Tuesday night's meeting of the Mt. Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners. The circus will be hosted by the airport at 2 and 5 p.m. Sunday. Previously, the airport hosted the Kelly Miller Circus, and according to the board, this Sunday's event will be larger with a wider variety of animals.

"I got a call about two weeks ago from Carson and Barnes," said Chris Collins, airport director. "They wanted to play Mt. Vernon and they had an open date. ... Same thing like Kelly Miller, they will come in and all we provide is a garden hose and water. ... This one's a bigger circus than Kelly Miller. Their tent seats 18,000 people."

Also in attendance at the meeting were Jennifer and Kevin Witzel, organizers of Balloons Over Mt. Vernon. This event will be held on Oct. 17 and 18 at the airport. The event will feature tethered balloon rides, a family area, a children's costume parade, a balloon launch and a pancake breakfast at Wilkey's Cafe to benefit the United Way.

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Sentinel Photo/EMILY ROTH

**BALLOONS AT THE AIRPORT** — Kevin, LEFT, and Jennifer Witzel, RIGHT, discuss their plans for the upcoming Balloons Over Mt. Vernon during Tuesday night's Airport Board meeting, while administrative assistant Shella Scrivner listens. The event will be held at the airport in October.

## Airport:

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"As many of you know, last year in October we had Balloons Over Mt. Vernon," stated Jennifer Witzel, "and those of you who were out here realized that we had an unexpected nice thing happen. We were expecting 200-300 people and we ended up

with close to 4,500 people, which was a nice thing, but we weren't ready for it."

"This year we are partnering with United Way in conjunction with Fall Fest," continued Witzel, "which is a little bit different than what we had last year, but it's worked out to be a great partnership."

There will be 15 balloons this year, whereas last year 10 were involved. Witzel hopes that in 2015 there will be 20 balloons, which she estimates is "a good number." 9-10-14

### IN OTHER NEWS:

- The board approved the lease of an airport suite to Arista Ramsey for a hair salon. No additional plumbing will be required for the business, though carpet will be removed.

- Collins deemed last weekend's LSA Expo a success, stating, "Everybody came together and it just worked out great. We've got the nucleus of something that can really grow."

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