

Board talks boost

Airport manager eyes electrical upgrade bids

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MT. VERNON — Mt. Vernon Outland Airport Manager Chris Collins presented a motion to seek bids for an electrical upgrade at Tuesday's Airport Board meeting.

The motion was approved by the board.

"This was just an introduction to a future project," Collins said. "When we built hangar number one a few years ago, there is an Ameren feeder line that runs underneath. The line is encased in steel and concrete so Ameren gave us permission to build over it on the condition that we move the transformer before we build a second building."

Collins reported that the transformer will be moved and a new feeder line will be installed and the old one will be abandoned.

This electric upgrade comes in the midst of what Collins called the Innovation Park initiative that began in 2013. He said the transformer and the area they want to build on are located on the southwest quadrant of the airport. Collins said the board is trying to rehabilitate the quadrant.

"Every manager and every board has tried to

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revitalize that quadrant," Collins said. "Back in the '70s when the airport was trying to land bigger and more commercial aircraft, the FAA said that everything needed to be pushed back off the

taxiway to make room for the wingspan of bigger planes. So that's why we enjoy the beautiful campus we have now because of those regulations. But since then, we've been trying to come up with a way to revitalize that area."

The board had the idea to build an Innovation Park in that area as a way to spark economic development in that section of the airport.

Collins reported there was interest from a tenant who wishes to occupy space in the Innovation

Park. Collins said for the airport to be able to build a second hangar to allow for the tenant, the transformer needs to be moved.

"We're hoping it brings more jobs and more economic growth to Mt. Vernon," Collins said.

In other business, the board awarded a bid to Bevis Construction to repair steel panels on the FBO Hangar door.

In addition, a motion was passed to concrete the approach to hangar number one in the Innovation Park.

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