

Mt. Vernon airport ready for expo

Airport Director Chris Collins looks to Mt. Vernon locals to act as ambassadors to visiting aviation enthusiasts

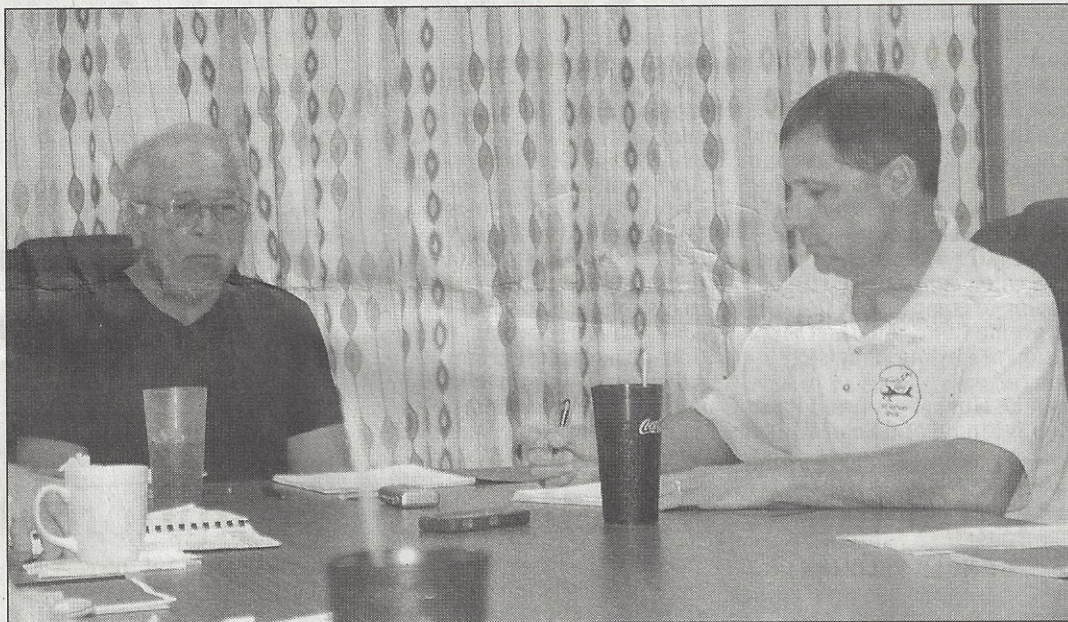
BY EMILY ROTH
SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

MT. VERNON — With the event date approaching, Mt. Vernon Outland Airport Director Chris Collins gave the Airport Authority Board of Commissioners one final update regarding the Plane and Pilot Midwest Light Sport Aircraft Expo during their Tuesday night meeting.

The seventh annual expo will fly its way into Mt. Vernon from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday through Saturday.

"The Light Sport Expo is starting Thursday," said Collins. "Come on out, shake some hands. Tell people 'Welcome to Mt. Vernon, we're glad you're here,' and all the stuff that I usually say to you. It looks like we could use some help parking the planes and just being basic ambassadors, checking out our exhibitors and seeing if they need a ladder or anything you can get them while they're here. We've got several new exhibitors, and we have taken lots of phone calls from people wanting to camp here. So I'm really excited about that. I think we've got a really good event shaping up."

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Sentinel Photo/EMILY ROTH

UPCOMING EVENT — Mt. Vernon Outland Airport Board Chairman Mike Ancona, **LEFT**, and airport Director Chris Collins discuss the upcoming Light Sport Aircraft Expo during the airport board's Tuesday night meeting. The expo will be held at the airport Thursday through Saturday

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For Collins, is it important for those from the area to show hospitality to visiting exhibitors in an effort to be an ambassador of Mt. Vernon and southern Illinois. He said that a welcoming atmosphere is instrumental in the expo returning to the Outland Airport each year for the local economy boost. He also encouraged help from anyone who would like to volunteer.

IN OTHER NEWS:

- A vote was taken regarding additional component of

the FBO (fixed-base operations) hangar door, which is to be renovated this month.

"I called most of the table about the change order to the FBO hangar door," Collins said. "We're going to start the project on Monday, I believe the 14th, right after the expo concludes. ... We were looking at the sheeting around the part that extends out that we're going to dress up, and we probably should have had this in the original bid but we didn't for some reason. We thought we should reuse the panels, but

those panels are nasty. They're corroded badly down at the bottom where they meet the ground. So that price to replace all the panels — we don't have to cut or repaint them, we don't have to worry about anything like that — that additional cost is \$750."

Though Collins had previously contacted each board member about the panels, the purchase required a formal approval from the board which was granted on Tuesday.

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