

Mt. Vernon Airport hosts LSA Expo

Event brings aircraft buyers and sellers from across the country

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MT. VERNON — Aircraft enthusiasts, buyers and sellers flocked to Mt. Vernon Outland Airport for the eighth annual Midwest LSA Expo on Saturday.

On the final day of the three-day event, Mt. Vernon Airport Director Chris Collins said it was an opportunity for knowledgeable aircraft owners, or those who wanted to purchase a light sport aircraft (LSA), to be around sellers in a relaxed environment.

"This is an opportunity for people to buy a particular style of aircraft, the LSA," Collins said. "At the huge air shows, you get families asking non-relevant questions like 'Is this a Cessna?'"

"This is an opportunity for the sellers and buyers to be in an environment without distractions."

Collins added the proximity to two major airports makes the LSA Expo a desirable destination.

Said Collins, "You're an hour and 15 minutes from both St. Louis-Lambert Airport and Evansville (Ind.) Airport. We've had people come from the Pacific Northwest, and another one come from Miami to shop here."

The decision to hold the Midwest LSA Expo at the same time as another popular Mt. Vernon festival, the Cedarhurst Arts and Crafts Fair, was an intentional one.

"We chose to hold our event at the same time as Cedarhurst to give the people of Mt. Vernon another option on where to spend their time," Collins said. "If the wife wants to go to Cedarhurst, but the husband doesn't, he can come out here and see what we have to offer."

The event has also featured several popular forums led by aeronautical experts during the weekend.

"[The forums] were organized by the Illinois Department of Transportation's Department of Aeronautics," Collins said. "The best in the industry are presenting these forums."

The idea for the Midwest LSA Expo came from the Sebring Air Expo in Florida. That air show also had a separate aircraft sales lot, but it has since been discontinued. Mt. Vernon and Lakeland, Fla. are the only air expos in the nation with separate lots today.

"The organizers of the Sebring Show helped us create ours, and we're considered a little brother to that show," Collins said. "Once they discontinued their air lot, we and Lakeland during Fall-Fest became the only ones in the country."

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Sentinel Photos/SHAWN SINGLETON

MIDWEST LSA EXPO — Buyers, sellers and airplane enthusiasts look at the selection of light sport aircraft at on the final day of the Midwest LSA Expo at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport on Saturday.



Aircraft:

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Collins added that the event would not have been successful without the many people who volunteered to work it.

"One person cannot do this alone," he said. "There is a

huge team tasked to put this together. The volunteers are always there for us."

Located at the intersection of Interstates 64 and 57, Mt. Vernon, Collins said, is a perfect place to hold events like the Midwest LSA Expo.

"We love putting these kinds of events on. Mt. Vernon has a lot of nice hotels, and it's a great place to hold events," he said. "Half of the

people in this country are within an eight-hour drive of Mt. Vernon, so we're a very easy drive for many people.

"Pittsburgh in the northeast is about eight hours away. Louisville is three, and Indianapolis is four. Kansas City is six hours away, and St. Louis is an hour and 15 minutes away. Atlanta is only around eight from here."

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