

# Airport board discusses new event

*EAA's "Fly on the Ford" coming to Mt. Vernon Outland Airport for first time*

**BY JOSH JONES**  
SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

MT. VERNON — A new event is coming to Mt. Vernon Outland Airport as Mt. Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners discussed "Fly on the Ford."

Airport director Chris Collins discussed his excitement Thursday for the event that will allow people to fly in the Experimental Aircraft Association's (EAA) Ford Tri-Motor 4-AT-E.

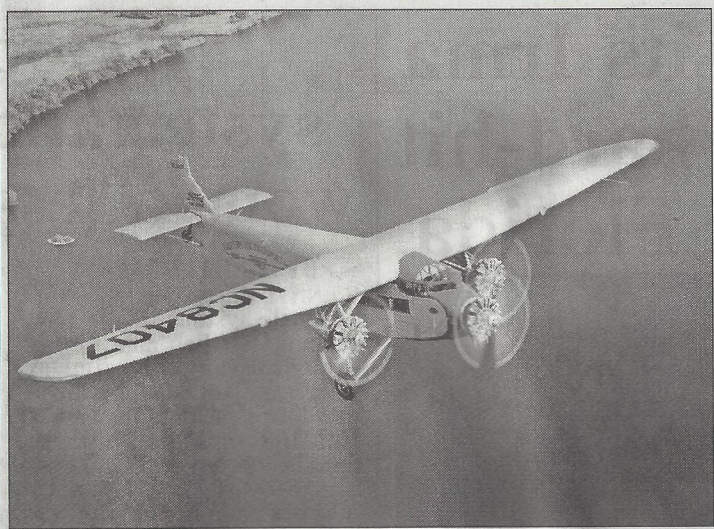
"It is a very affordable ride on a historic airliner. It really excites me that people would come through the terminal and get on an airliner again, even if they are not flying to some other destination," Collins said.

"Fly on the Ford" offers around 20-minute rides over Jefferson County from Sept. 28 to Oct. 1. Rides are offered from 2 to 5 p.m. that Thursday, and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. that Friday through Sunday.

"It has never been here before," Collins said of the historic aircraft. "We did have a Tri-Motor reproduction here in 1996."

According to information provided, the EAA's Ford Tri-Motor (tail number NC8407) was manufactured on Aug. 21, 1929 and was purchased by Pitcairn Airways, which flew it up and down the East Coast of the United States in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Eastern Airways, the forerunner of Eastern Airlines, subsequently purchased Pitcairn Airways.

The aircraft has been to Cuba as well as Central and South America. In the 1940s it was used to transport



Submitted Photo

**FLY ON THE FORD** — The Experimental Aircraft Association's Ford Tri-Motor (NC8407) is coming to Mt. Vernon Outland Airport Sept. 28 to Oct. 1. Rides will be offered from 2 to 5 p.m. that Thursday, and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. that Friday through Sunday. People can purchase tickets either online or by walking up to the flight line.

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smoke jumpers who fought forest fires in Idaho and Montana. In 1973 the airplane was destroyed by a storm and considered a total loss, but was later purchased by the EAA and restored in 1985. Today the aircraft is hangared at Pioneer Airport's Pitcairn Hangar when it is not being taken on tour.

"EAA's Tri-Motor is coming here. I could be mistaken but I think it is the first visit to Southern Illinois," Collins said. "I know it has been over at the Metro East airports, and it has been at St. Louis Downtown Airport, but I don't think it has been to any of our Southern Illinois airports."

Along with the plane rides

people will get a chance to see a lot of classic cars on Sept. 30.

"After downtown development's car show in conjunction with Fall Fest, we invited all the cars to come out here and be with the airplane," Collins said.

Collins encouraged people to attend the event in hopes of seeing the historic aircraft return.

"Obviously, we want to impress the EAA. We want them to come back and put us on a regular schedule," Collins said, "and the best way of doing that is to have as many people come and visit and take a ride."

For more information people can visit "Fly the Ford's" official website. People can purchase tickets online in advance for a discount or do walk-up pricing at the airport.

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