

# Wilkey's Cafe closes its doors

*Airport seeks new  
restaurant operator*

**BY TRAVIS MORSE**  
SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

MT. VERNON — Wilkey's Airport Cafe officially closed on Oct. 21 after about 10 years of serving the Mt. Vernon Outland Airport.

Most recently, the family-owned business opened at the airport in the spring of 2011, but it also had a previous stint at the airport in the late 1990s. The business originated in Belle Rive in the early 1950s, according to an airport news release.

"Donnie, Cherlyn, Sean, Aleasha, Natasha, Con and the girls were family to us," said Airport Director Chris Collins. "On behalf of Team MVN, I want to thank the Wilkey family for nearly 70 years of service to Southern Illinois."

Donnie G. Wilkey of Belle Rive, the owner and operator of Wilkey's Cafe, passed away on Aug. 22. He had also worked as a coal miner and was the former mayor of Belle Rive.

After his passing, Wilkey's family had tried to keep Wilkey's Cafe going at the airport. However, the family members all work full-time jobs and it became impossible to continue operating the restaurant, said Airport Administrative Assistant Sheila Jolly-Scrivner.

"It's been a family business since its inception," Jolly-Scrivner said of the cafe.

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Submitted Photo

**CAFE CLOSED** — Wilkey's Airport Cafe, pictured here in 2013, officially closed its doors on Oct. 21 at the Mt. Vernon Outland Airport. The airport is now seeking a new restaurant operator for the space.

## Cafe:

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The airport is now seeking proposals for a new restaurant operator after the departure of Wilkey's Cafe. Those who are interested are asked to submit a proposal for their restaurant to the airport by 5 p.m. Nov. 13.

According to the airport's Request for Proposals, this opportunity includes nearly all necessary infrastructure required to function as a daily restaurant, banquet or party

and even catering service provider.

"The airport is a dynamic and exciting place," Jolly-Scrivner said. "With many people working daily on the campus, coupled with the availability of hosting banquets, parties and lunch/dinner meetings, we are confident someone will want to join our team."

A specification defining the supplied infrastructure and other key parameters of the project is available at the office of the Mt. Vernon Airport Authority at the airport. Included in the specification are

the desired operating hours of the restaurant.

Jolly-Scrivner said the Mt. Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners will likely discuss the proposals received during its next regular meeting at 6 p.m. Nov. 13.

Collins said the issue will be on the agenda but it's unclear if the board will make a decision that evening. There's no firm deadline for when airport officials want to have a new restaurant opened, he said.

For more information, contact the Mt. Vernon Outland Airport.

[tmorse@morningsentinel.com](mailto:tmorse@morningsentinel.com)