

Airport prepares for Balloons Over Mt. Vernon 2015

BY EMILY ROTH
SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

MT. VERNON — After the success of Balloons Over Mt. Vernon during this year's Fall Fest, the Mt. Vernon Airport Authority began to look toward October 2015 during their meeting on Tuesday night.

"Even though the weather was 'raunchy' for us except for Sunday morning, I still would call it a success," said Jennifer Witzel, one of the event organizers along with her husband, Kevin.

"Saturday was questionable, but at least some of us were able to get in the air and people had something to see," said Kevin Witzel.

Through Balloons Over Mt. Vernon, approximately \$2,000 was raised for the United Way of South Central Illinois.

"What we're looking at next year is Balloon Over Mt. Vernon, Fly-In, and Veterans Reunion weekend. You'll notice we've added a few things to that. I think Kevin and I finally convinced Chris [Collins] that it's time to bring the Fly-In back and the Veterans Reunion. ... We would like to do that and we've already started plans for next year."

The board voted to approve Balloons Over Mt. Vernon being held at the airport next year Oct. 16 through 18.

The Experimental Aircraft Association's Little Egypt Fly-In and Veterans Reunion was last held in October 2013 at the airport. That year a seminar was held to educate people regarding careers in aviation. After the

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SHOWING THE PLANS — Airport Director Chris Collins shows the Mt. Vernon Outland Airport Board his proposed plans for a new hangar door on Tuesday. The door was discussed, in addition to new plans for Balloons Over Mt. Vernon.

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seminar, young members of the audience were encouraged to participate in the free Eagle Flights sponsored by EAA Chapter 1155 pilots. Many children lined up to receive a flight in one of the several single-engine aircraft, receiving a first-hand introduction into aviation.

Jennifer Witzel stated that she and her husband are not the only ones who run the event, as they are helped by a

committee.

"The Fly-In and the Veterans Reunion will just make your event better," said airport board Chairman Mike Ancona to the Witzels.

IN OTHER NEWS:

• Airport Director Chris Collins discussed the possibility of installing a new door in the aviation hangar. Collins estimated the cost to total approximately \$40,000, including costs of the door, engineering, and labor. The project was estimated to take three days, but due to the incoming winter weather and leaving the hangar exposed to the cold during installation, the board took no action.

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