

Hertz Corp. enters tentative agreement to occupy airport

Company previously at airport wants to return by end of year

BY RICK HAYES

MT. VERNON MANAGING EDITOR

MT. VERNON — Mt. Vernon's Airport Authority has reached a tentative lease agreement with Hertz Corp., in Suite A of the Koziara Terminal.

It will be the second stint for Hertz, which leased a portion of the airport facility back in the 1980s and '90s, when the airport had essential air service.

"There is a need for rental cars here at the airport," explained Airport Manager Chris Collins. "They [Hertz] set their sights on

Mt. Vernon as a place for possible expansion. They do a lot of business with insurance companies, adjusters and body shops. They offer a lot of one-way rentals."

Collins said the tentative agreement is for one year, with an option for a second year.

"They want to get started real quick," Collins said, noting that if both parties agree to the agreement, Hertz could occupy the terminal by the end of the calendar year.

During the "public" portion of the meeting, the commissioners heard a presentation from Rodney Mullinax, who along with his wife Jana, founded Flights for Christ.

The Mullinaxes felt compelled to do more for the people of Haiti following the devastating earthquake in that country about a year

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ago. Although the couple have participated in a couple of compassion flights, their primary focus is on helping Haitians — providing daily

needs, such as water and food, and medical supplies. Haiti is about 1,500 miles from Mt. Vernon, with a typical flight costing between \$1,800 and \$2,000.

The Mullinaxes, who had a modest home, felt so strongly about the need to help Haiti that they sold their modest home and are now renting housing. Based on their

budget, they make two or three annual trips to Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

Mullinax did not ask the Airport Authority for anything specific, but he wanted them to know that Flights for Christ, which includes five board members — including Collins, uses the Mt. Vernon Airport as its home base.

IN OTHER BUSINESS:

- Approved Aggressive Fire Prevention Inc. to conduct the annual inspection of the airport's 64 fire extinguishers, based on the 2010 inspection. Campbell Fire will be retained for the range hood inspection in the kitchen;

- A surplus of about 500 feet of fencing, or "stringing fabric," has caused some headaches for airport personnel, in that several parties have expressed an interest in it. The board is faced with either selling it, donating it or keeping it. Commissioner Joe Bob Pierce made a motion for the board to hold on to the fencing, at least until its next meeting at 6 p.m. Dec. 13.

- Collins announced that the annual airport Christmas party, open to airport staff, SRT Aviation, and members of the EAV chapter, will be held at 6 p.m. Dec. 12.

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MAKES PRESENTATION — Rodney Mullinax of Flights for Christ makes a presentation to the Mt. Vernon Airport Authority on Tuesday. Mullinax provides compassion flights and has focused the organization's efforts on helping the people of Haiti and in the Dominican Republic.

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