

Airport Board hears of health insurance increase

BY RICK HAYES

MT. VERNON MANAGING EDITOR

MT. VERNON — Mt. Vernon's Airport Authority was informed Tuesday night that health insurance premiums will be going up 24 percent in 2011. But board members may be able to offset that increase if they accept a proposal from an energy company that has offered a 23 percent savings over a three-year period.

Airport Manager Chris Collins said the Blue Cross/Blue Shield health insurance premiums for the five employees at the airport will raise \$6,870 during 2011, although the deductible will remain at \$1,000 per employee. He said comparable rates were quoted by Health Alliance, although the out-of-pocket expense for employees would increase from \$2,000 to \$3,500 annually. Health Alliance

offered a lower per month premium, but Collins said airport officials have no guarantee the rate will be locked in after employees fill out their eligibility forms.

Since the Blue Cross/Blue Shield premium is due at the end of the calendar year, the commissioners voted to renew that contract, but they didn't rule out having employees fill out information for the Health Alliance plan. The airport has had the Blue Cross/Blue Shield plan for the past four years, Collins said.

Jim Mueller, vice president of Global Energy Services, LLC, and partner Wayne Hicks of Mt. Vernon, presented an electricity cost savings analysis to the board. Mueller explained that Global is a consulting firm "helping business-

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es save money." After looking over the airport's electricity use over the past 12 months, Mueller's company calculated an annual savings of 23 percent, based on 5.2 cents per kilowatt usage. The new rate is through Ameren Energy Marketing. The airport

currently uses Ameren IL at 6.7 cents per kilowatt hour. The airport's usage over 12 months was 354,024 kilowatt hours, according to information provided on the analysis sheet.

"Energy savings is at an all-time low," Mueller told the commissioners. "If you lock in this new rate now, you should see savings down the road."

While Global offers rates based on 12, 24 and 36-month plans, Mueller recommended the authority lock in the new

rate over a three-year period.

"The rates could go down, but not much," Mueller added.

The commission tabled the matter until further discussions could be held.

IN OTHER BUSINESS:

- A change order of \$1,035 was approved for the addition of two shower stalls in the new hangar.

- Collins reported the roof was completed on the new hangar last week, although recent poor weather has

stymied overall progress. He said completion of the hangar door is dependent on weather conditions.

- The transfer of the airport's web site from its old server to a new one was completed Tuesday. Collins said the web site upgrade is something that he is proud of, adding, "I hope the community is as happy as I am." The web site has over 50 pages, including a link to the airport's Veterans Wall of Honor.

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