

# Vintage plane plans take flight

Experimental Aircraft Association constructing wood-and-cloth airplane

By RORYE O'CONNOR

rorye.oconnor@register-news.com

MT. VERNON — A local group with a love for aviation is banding together to build its own set of wings.

Rich Carney, SRT Aviation president and the incoming president of the local Experimental Aircraft Association, said he wants to generate more interest in aviation in the community with the construction of a Pietenpol, a primarily wood-and-cloth airplane designed in 1928.

The licensed mechanics at SRT Aviation volunteered their time and expertise to help build the airplane.

"I decided after we at SRT volunteered — if they build one, we'd be glad to help build it for a project," Carney said.

Mechanics at SRT are likely to work on building the plane one night a week, but EAA members may come help build during the day, Carney said, and SRT mechanics will provide guidance.

"SRT is going to take this under our wing to help the chapter get this thing going," he said.

Carney was voted in as president of the EAA in Mt. Vernon in October 2010 and just recently took office, he said.

He said the goal of the construction of the plane is to generate excitement in aviation and the EAA.

"We're looking to spur interest," he said.



Rich Carney, SRT Aviation president and the incoming president of the local EAA looks at plans and photos for a Pietenpol airplane, a wood-and-fabric aircraft designed in 1928. The EAA is planning to build the aircraft with the guidance of SRT mechanics. RORYE O'CONNOR/REGISTER-NEWS

"We want people from high schoolers to senior citizens with an interest in aviation.

"There are some people who used to be EAA members who say that they're going to be coming back and rejoining because we're building a plane."

He said he hopes to show off the plane during the Southern Illinois Harvest Festival, and that he may try to put the plane — even in its unfinished state — on a parade float.

Mt. Vernon Outland Airport manager Chris Collins said the project is perfect for anyone looking to learn how to build an airplane.

"We just ordered the plans," Collins said. "It's a classic design from the 20s designed by an aviation engineer, and only simple construction knowledge is needed."

EAA members are looking for those who

see PLANE/Page 3A

## PLANE

continued from 1A

have skills in woodworking, because the Pietenpol is largely constructed of wood and built from jigs, Carney said.

It can be powered by a number of engines, including a Chevrolet Corvair engine or

a Model A Ford engine, which was the original engine put in the Pietenpol, Carney said. The plane can achieve an altitude of about 10,000 feet, he added, and goes about 85 miles per hour at the most, depending on the motor.

The plane can be built as a one-seater or a two-seater, and the EAA has plans to build a two-seater model, Carney said.

Carney said he has never built a plane from scratch before, though he has rebuilt antique planes before.

He expects the plane to take about 600 to 1000 hours to build, adding that they're very popular, and he knows of six others being built by various people and organizations around Southern Illinois.

"They're very easy to fly, economical, and we're hop-

ing to build it for \$10,000 or less," Carney said. "We're looking for any donations that anyone would want to give. It will be a learning experience for everyone, on how it's built and what makes it fly." 1-10-11