

Airport continues talks with carrier

*Carrier will dedicate planes,
pilots to airport in exchange
for usage commitment*

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MT. VERNON — The on-demand air service eyeing Mt. Vernon as its next location is continuing discussions with officials of the Mt. Vernon Outland Airport.

Alan Hale, chairman of the Mt. Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners, informed the board Tuesday night that discussions with Point 2 Point Airways were ongoing and expected to move forward with a survey process to gather data gauging interest in the offering at the end of the month.

Officials with Point 2 Point visited the King City in September to present a profile of the company and provide the public with information regarding the services that could be offered should the airway decide to bring its air travel services to the region.

Hale said discussions were revisited last week and a conference call is scheduled for Friday. The next step, he said, is to present a survey locally.

"At the end of the month we'll roll out a local survey and start contacting local businesses," he said.

Through its service, Point 2 Point would dedicate both planes and pilots to the airport, having dedicated service offerings and special pricing to select companies in the community.

According to information provided by Point 2 Point Airways, the company would, in return, ask the

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companies for a usage commitment and financial assistance for the purchase of aircraft.

The commitment could include as little as three companies committing to 100,000 travel miles annually, according to Point 2 Point Airways.

Point 2 Point offers a personal airline concept to serve the business and personal traveler and provide an alternative to roadway traveling as well as the "frustrating, time-consuming and customer-unfriendly airline model."

Known as "on-demand travel," flying with a company such as Point 2 Point eliminates the traditional airline and terminal processes, company information states.

According to information provided by the company, "Gone are the advance-arrival requirements, parking problems, long lines, luggage hassles, security probes, and unnecessary connecting flights."

The company estimates a time savings of three to 12 hours in comparison with commercial flights.

The company describes the process in three steps: Park next to the door, check in on the plane; and take off.

"The whole process only takes about 10 minutes," the company states in its Web site. "With a Point 2 Point reservation, you simply show up at one of our convenient community airports 10 minutes before your flight. Park next to the door. Check in on the plane with your pilot (who will stow your luggage and get you comfortable). And ... take off!"

In addition, on-demand travel allows for personal delays and changes in schedule through the use of any active cell phone.

"Your cell phone is your remote control for your Point 2 Point flight. It's your direct connection to your pilot. Need more time, running late, want to head home early? Just call. After all, you are in charge of the plane," the site states.

Point 2 Point is able to utilize smaller airports through the implementation of all-digital flight control systems that enable the aircraft to make precision, instrument landings and takeoffs at airports without ground radar or control towers.

The company was founded by CEO John F. Boehle in 2005

after a four-year working relationship with NASA, the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Federal Aviation Administration to determine the market feasibility of a next-generation air service in the Great Plains region.

According to information provided by the company, "These studies illuminated the tremendous need for expanded air connectivity in the 'underserved' Great Plains market — but also uncovered a large, growing 'under-served' market of travelers in large cities who were extremely frustrated with conventional hub-and-spoke carriers."

Boehle said the company was founded as an alternative to commercial, charter or air-taxi travel and referred to the possibility of Point 2 Point entering the Mt. Vernon area as a "terrific opportunity."

The fee schedule for flight on Point 2 Point is based on a per-mile rate for the aircraft. Boehle explained a \$2.50 per mile corporate rate for a 600 mile trip would calculate to \$1,500. However, that cost is then divided by the number of passengers, making a three-passenger flight about \$500 round-trip.

In September, the company had five aircraft in its fleet and was taking on one to two

additional planes per month with estimations of that growth continuing for the next four years.

According to information from the company, included in the available aircraft in the Point 2 Point fleet are:

- Diamond Aircraft DA42 Twin Star. The DA42 Twin Star is a propeller-driven aircraft with a capacity of up to three passengers, leather seats, a cruise speed of 200 mph and a range of 1,300 miles.

- Diamond Aircraft D-JET. The D-JET is Diamond's next-generation personal light jet (PLJ). It accommodates three to four passengers in leather-seated comfort, with a cruise speed of 362 mph and a range of 1,563 miles at an altitude of up to 25,000 feet.

- Cirrus Design SR22. The SR-22 is a comfortable three-passenger prop plane that accommodates up to three passengers in leather seats and has a cruise speed of 210 mph and an effective range of 900 miles.

- Eclipse Aviation E500 Jet. The E500 is a new very light jet (VLJ) capable of accommodating four to five passengers in executive-class leather comfort, with a cruise speed of 425 mph and a range of 1,294 miles at an altitude of up to 41,000 feet.

Hale said he hopes to have further information at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the board.

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