

Annual aviation report shows increase

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MT. VERNON — The Mt. Vernon Outland Airport Authority Board of Commissioners annual aviation report showed increased operations during 2011.

Airport Manager Chris Collins, in detailing the report, said Outland Airport had an increase of 53 percent in jet operations.

“It can be seen as a barometer for economic development, job creation and retention,” Collins said.

Outland had 308 pure jet operations in 2011, up from 144 in 2010, according to Collins.

“I found it surprising the

amount of retailer traffic we had,” Collins added.

Total operations were up 7.8 percent, according to Collins’ report. Base tenancy climbed to 46, an increase of four from 2010.

“I think our fine assortment of tenants and great infrastructure are laying a foundation of success. People are viewing us as a good place to stop and visit.” Collins added. “There has been a lot of maintenance work also, which is very exciting.”

Detailing the tenancy, Collins said nine multi-engine airplanes and three helicopters were currently stored at the airport.

“Those are both record highs,”

Collins noted. “These type of aircraft are not hobbyists. They’re used for business.”

At the onset of the meeting, a moment of silence was requested for Max Firebaugh, who recently passed on. Firebaugh was manager of the facility from 1966 to 1989.

“He’s the last of three important individuals who dedicated their lives to the airport. Earl Outland, Stan Koziara and Firebaugh were really three pillars,” said Don Lewis, who spoke briefly following the moment of silence.

“Max was in the manager’s chair when this airport went from a

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municipal airport to a jet-park,” Collins added.

A report on the perimeter fence project was also given. Work is scheduled to resume Monday with completion of the project expected in early February.

“We shut down the work on the project just before Christmas,” he said. “Conditions were just too wet.

Even though we wanted to get it completed we didn’t want to risk tearing up any ground around the buildings.”

Installation of obstruction lighting along on the fence at the runway approach is expected to be completed today, according to Collins.

Collins said the process to obtain a Pavement Classification Number is ongoing. Currently, four weight classifications are used to determine total traffic an

airport can receive within various time frames.

Collins said he expects Outland to receive increases in load capacity which will be “good for business.”

“It will be a step forward and could boost operations in different categories,” Collins added.

In other business, Collins said Hertz Rental Car is expected to be operating in Koziara Terminal Suite “A” in early February.

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