



Sentinel Photo, LEIGH ANN WILLIAMS

**FLIGHT PLAN** — Mt. Vernon Outland Airport director Chris Collins introduces the director of Illinois Department of Transportation Division of Aeronautics, Susan Shea, Ph.D., to city and county officials and members of the community during her tour of the facility Monday. Shea said she was impressed with the airport, its facilities, land use and proposed projects.

## Director of aeronautics makes stop at Mt. Vernon Airport

BY LEIGH ANN WILLIAMS  
SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

**MT. VERNON** — Illinois Department of Transportation Division of Aeronautics Director Susan Shea, Ph.D., gave the Mt. Vernon Outland Airport her stamp of approval following a visit to the King City Monday afternoon.

Shea and other Division of Aeronautics officials were given a tour of the airport, its services and facilities prior to a press conference in the Kozaria Terminal Lobby.

The Mt. Vernon Airport Authority works closely with Shea and her

team to secure funding for ongoing projects, improvements and its overall master plan.

"Dr. Shea is a dynamic person, has a wonderful personality and is enthusiastic about Illinois aviation," said Alan Hale, chairman of the Mt. Vernon Airport Authority.

"I enjoy working with Dr. Shea and her team at the Division of Aeronautics. One feels like part of the family when he works with Dr. Shea and her staff," added airport director Chris Collins.

Shea outlined the "exciting" projects at the airport and publicly

thanked all those involved with a recent obstruction removal project to increase the safety of the airport.

The airport worked closely with its neighboring property owners to both purchase properties and build a cooperative effort to successfully launch the runway obstruction removal project.

Shea called the effort an "excellent example" of cooperation through private and public entities and expressed her gratitude to all those involved.

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## Airport Tour:

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In June 2000, the Federal Aviation Administration determined that there were obstructions penetrating the floor of the instrument landing system glidescope on Runway 23 at the airport.

A notice was issued by the FAA stating "ILS 23 Unavailable," effectively switching a million-dollar system that allows aircraft to land in nearly all weather conditions to the "off" position.

In the summer of 2005, the Mt. Vernon Airport Authority initiated a massive campaign to identify the obstructions and return the ILS system to service. Nearly 85 trees were identified on 11 different parcels of private land. The area containing obstructions was scattered over 60 acres.

"It has been a remarkable example of dedication and teamwork," Collins states. "Team MVN' deserves some praise for identifying a major problem and taking the necessary steps to correct the problem. However, our neighbors beneath the approach along Old Fairfield Road deserve the highest amount of gratitude for helping to re-establish the ILS at MVN."

The Mt. Vernon Airport, IDOT-Division of Aeronautics and FAA expressed their public thanks to the Green Hills Country Club, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Chris Ashby, Mr. and Mrs. David Adcock, Mr. Mike O'Hare, Mr. Ken O'Hare, Mr. and Mrs. Jeremy Mount, Mr. and Mrs. James Hanson, Mr. and Mrs. Brian Stephenson, Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Almaroad, Mr. and Mrs. Travis Loyd, Ken Highsmith, Ed Loss and Kim Loss.

"We thank our neighbors for helping to make Illinois aviation safer and keeping the necessary infrastructure at MVN in working order," Collins states.

Shea further praised the airport for its proactive approach to safety through its purchase of state-of-the-art firefighting equipment and the AirEvac Lifeteam Superbase.

"You truly do have safety covered," Shea said. "You're working preventively and if and when, and we hope it never does, something happens, you have the best piece of equipment known to man at this time."

Shea encouraged the community to use its airport as an economic development tool through the ease of travel, potential for jobs and convenience for large employers seeking to locate in the area. [lwilliams@morningsentinel.com](mailto:lwilliams@morningsentinel.com)