

Point2Point demonstrates air traveling options

Flight time from Mt. Vernon to St. Louis was about 25 minutes

BY TESA CULLI 3-13-07
MANAGING EDITOR

MT. VERNON — In business, time is money, and those taking the demonstration flight for Point2Point AirConnect Monday said the service takes a lot of hassle and lost time from conventional business flights.

"There's definitely a need around here for something like this," Chris Barker of DataLock said. Barker was scouting the service for four local companies. "I mean, for us to go to St. Louis and back took about an hour. Typically, it would take an hour and a half to two hours just to get to Lambert [Airport], then another hour to get through the gates and security before you even leave the airport."

Point2Point kicked off its "Million Mile" pledge campaign earlier this month. The campaign is to secure a million miles in annual customer air service contracts for the region to bring the air service to Mt. Vernon Outland Airport. Mt. Vernon would act as the base of operations for the on-demand air service, if travel mile commitments from companies in the community and throughout the region can be obtained.

Pilots would be recruited and based from the area, and aircraft would be based locally, according to Point2Point Founder John F. Boehle. Boehle founded the company in 2005 after working four years with NASA, the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Federal Aviation Administration to determine market feasibility of a "next generation" air service in the Great Plains region.

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

The company describes the on-demand travel in three steps: park next to the door; check in on the plane; and take off.

That's what those on the demonstration flight to St. Louis did on Monday. Point2Point Pilot Andrew Pierce of Grand Forks, N.D., waited for his passengers to arrive at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport, chatting with them until flight time. He then helped them into the Cirrus SR 22 aircraft and explained all safety procedures before taking off for St. Louis.

Pierce flew at about 6,000 feet during the flight, which took about 25 minutes. Once at Lambert Airport, he taxied to

Signature Flight Services and helped his passengers disembark.

"This is great, a great place to wait for the next flight or to get a little work done," Barker commented about the Signature lobby. A shuttle van then took passengers to the main terminal, where they were dropped off as if they were going to connect with a large commercial flight.

Passengers on the demonstration flight then went to the baggage claim area of the main terminal and met the Signature Flight Service shuttle van to be taken back to the Signature lobby.

"This is where you would be picked up if you were going by Point2Point from St. Louis to Mt. Vernon," Barker mused as he walked through the baggage area. "They could pick you up wherever you needed to be. As a matter of fact, if we had a customer coming in, instead of having someone come pick him up at the airport in St. Louis, we could have him picked up and flown straight to Mt. Vernon. Treat the client right."

From the time the plane left Mt. Vernon, landed in St. Louis, the passengers were taken to the main terminal and then got back on the



Sentinel Photo/TESA CULLI

TRYING OUT THE SERVICE — Local businessman Chris Barker, RIGHT, discusses some of the capabilities of the Point2Point AirConnect plane and company services with pilot Andrew Pierce during a demonstration flight on Monday. The flight was from Mt. Vernon Outland Airport to Lambert Airport in St. Louis and back. Barker took the flight on behalf of four local businesses which utilize air service on a frequent basis. "There's definitely a need for a service like this in the area," Barker said.

Point2Point plant at Signature Flight Services, Barker timed the entire trip at one hour. "That's a big difference from conventional travel," Barker commented.

Mt. Vernon Airport manager Chris Collins said discussions are under way with other com-

munities in the region which could benefit from the service while maintaining a base in Mt. Vernon.

Additional information about the flight service is available by contacting Collins at 242-7016.

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Making the connection



Point2Point pilot Mike Andersen, left, shows SRT Aviation President Richard Carney one of the company's planes Thursday at Mt. Vernon-Outland Airport. LEAH NICOLE WILLIAMS/REGISTER-NEWS



Sentinel Photo/DANIELLE TYLER

Point2Point AirConnect launched the "Million Mile" Campaign Thursday at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport and a conference included a tour through the aircrafts including this 2-passenger plane.