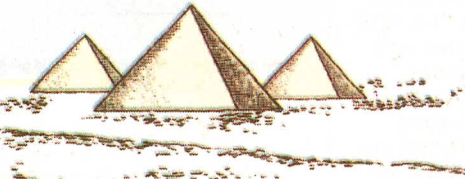


MT. VERNON Sentinel



149TH YEAR — VOL. CXLIX No. 4

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14, 2012

AN EDITION OF THE SENTINEL — 50 CENTS

Santorum to visit Mt. Vernon Airport

Mt. Vernon Airport Board discusses visit, other projects

BY REANNE PALMER
SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

MT. VERNON — Mt. Vernon Airport Manager Chris Collins announced Tuesday at the Board of Commissioners meeting that Republican Presidential candidate Senator Rick Santorum will stop at the Airport Saturday as a part of his campaign through

Southern Illinois.

The tour is starting in Fairview Heights, with likely stops in Effingham, Vandalia, and Marion as well.

“It’s a big deal not only for the Airport, but for Mt. Vernon too,” said Collins.

Senator Santorum will arrive at the new hanger of the Mt. Vernon Airport around 5:15 p.m. He will give a 30- to 45-minute speech, starting at 5:30 p.m. Collins urged everyone to come attend the historical event.

“This is a fantastic opportunity for the Airport to host Santorum. We’ve had vice presidents and first ladies, and we’re excited to keep

the tradition going. I’m real excited,” said Collins.

County GOP Chairman Richard Stubblefield said Tuesday that no presidential candidates in recent memory have been in Mt. Vernon, although President Obama was here shortly after he gave a keynote address at a Democratic convention. He recalled that Walter Mondale was at Veterans Memorial Park while serving as the nation’s vice president. Hillary Clinton, of course, campaigned on behalf of her husband Bill during the 1996 presidential campaign.

Please see **Airport**, Page 3A



Sentinel Photo/REANNE PALMER

AIRPORT BUSINESS — Members of Mt. Vernon Airport Board of Commissioners met Tuesday night to discuss future projects and events. The members are, **FROM LEFT**, Galen Monk, Gary Chesney, Greg Martin, Chris Collins and Mike Ancona.

Airport:

Continued From Page 1A

3-14-12

The Board of Commissioners also had a moment of silence in honor of R.D. White. White helped the Air-

port start the Hall of Honor, which now houses around 300 tributes to area veterans. The Airport recently named the "R.D. White Veterans Museum" in honor of Mr. White.

The Board also discussed a new development in the southwest quadrant. Collins suggested that the Board begin a new building project with a small, but flexible hanger.

"This would jumpstart a new development area at the airport," said Collins. "No property taxes or bonds will be used for this project. It will be income from the airport or farming profits."

The smaller hanger was estimated around \$300,000, but Collins urged that the new development would help diversify the airport. He added that the new building could be used for many purposes and that it can be expanded upon, added to, or converted into anything once built.

Mike Ancona, board member, said, "I don't have a problem with going outside the box... and it seems like we're moving forward."

The development was tabled for further research and will be discussed again at next month's meeting.

IN OTHER BUSINESS:

- The fence surrounding the airport has been completed. There is groundwork that needs finishing, but the construction is done.

- The Board approved a request from Louis Beckley of the Epilepsy Foundation of Greater Southern Illinois to use the Airport as the location for Sara's Walk in 2012. The Walk was located in Carbondale last year, but the Foundation would like to move closer to their office. The Walk runs from 9 a.m. to noon and provides a lunch for those registered.

- The Board discussed the doubling of project shares from 2.5 percent to 5 percent starting in 2012. Collins said, "We'll have to put some extra fundraising efforts for future projects."

- The Board approved to pay local share of \$3516 for a drainage study for the Runway Safety Project.

- The Board approved the low bid of \$3400 to Wielt Plumbing in Mt. Vernon to fix restrooms in the Koziara terminal.

- The Board approved the purchase of a tow bar and head from Tate's Flying Service in Salem for \$600.

rpalmer@morningsentinel.com