



Sentinel Photo/JASON SILVEY

DREAMS OF FLYING — Families attending the Fly-In/Drive-In/Ride-In Breakfast on Saturday at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport got to see the new Jabiru J-250 light sport aircraft model on display locally for the first time.

Monthly airport breakfast spurs interest in aviation for local, visiting families

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MT. VERNON — A brand new model of sport aircraft was on display at Saturday morning's Fly-In/Drive-In/Ride-In Breakfast at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport.

The event is the latest in an ongoing series of breakfasts open to anyone in the community, and one of the things that makes it special for the general public is the chance to learn about aviation from the pilots flying in for their share of the food and fun.

Rich Carney, President of SRT Aviation, which hosts the monthly meeting, said, "Last month was the biggest month [for attendance] we've ever had, and we expect this one to be

even bigger."

Although the week's rain and clouds have finally moved on, the incoming pilots had to wait until the morning sun dissipated the fog on the runway before they could land.

The airport has become an attractive destination for aviation enthusiasts from several states to bring their aircraft.

"We've got people coming in from Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri. We've had some that have come from Alabama and Ohio, and this month we're expecting some people from Tennessee and Michigan," Carney said.

SRT Aviation's flight instructors

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ROLLING OUT — A plane is pulled out of the hangar to display to the breakfast's attendees and for an eventual take-off.

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were available Saturday to answer questions about flying and to take the curious on introductory plane rides.

In the hangar, many attendees stopped to examine the brand new Jabiru J-250 light sport aircraft on display through the airport's Eric Evans Aviation dealership.

Owner Eric Evans, who deals in both new and used planes, said the new Jabiru model is one of the reasons so many people in the Midwest are becoming interested in flying.

"The [Federal Aviation Administration] has relaxed some of the medical restrictions to allow pilots, especially older ones, to continue to fly in this type of aircraft," he said. "It's small and light, and it's not too fast."

Many families bring their children to see the planes, and attracting a new generation to aviation is one of the major goals of the airport's Fly-In Breakfast.

Evans said, "Piloting was really big in the '70s and '80s. Most of the pilots are getting older now and airlines are retiring them. There's a continual shortage of pilots. Light sport aircrafts are a way for parents to get their kids involved. It's a lower point of entry to see if they enjoy flying."

Whether they're in the cockpit, in the passenger seat, or still on the ground, the breakfast is a way to offer the community an activity for every member of the family.

"These breakfasts have been really successful for good, old-

fashioned fellowship over the last 16 months," Carney said. "It's exciting that the airport has become a destination for Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, and Missouri pilots, as well as local citizens on the first Saturday of each month."
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