

MV Airport holds hangar dedication

By **DEREK BEIGH**

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MT. VERNON — City, county and state business and aviation leaders came to Outland Airport Friday morning to acclaim and witness the dedication of the airport's new Community Hangar.

The hangar, which was commissioned to allow large aircraft to stop in Mt. Vernon for travel or fueling, was completed early this month after almost three years of planning and construction. The project finished at almost exactly its anticipated cost of \$1,100,000, \$700,000 of which was con-

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Local leaders celebrate after Commissioner Paul Dickerson of the Mt. Vernon Airport Authority cut the ribbon at Outland's Community Hangar Friday. The \$1.1 million facility will allow larger aircraft to frequent Mt. Vernon in what Mayor Mary Jane Chesley called "a crowning touch to the King City."

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tributed locally.

"We thought if we were going to be competitive as a city, county and region, we needed more storage space," said Airport Manager Chris Collins. "Everyone pitched in, rolled up their sleeves and helped, and we couldn't have done it without them and their understanding."

The building has an interior capacity of 11,888 square feet, ideal for regional commercial planes such as the Bombardier CRJ-700 Regional Jetliner and Gulfstream 550 Intercontinental Aircraft. It's already served as shelter for such a vehicle during a thunderstorm in February.

"You folks were able to be a rescue for that aircraft. We've been proud to be a small part of this. It's about providing shelter in the storm," said Illinois Division of Aeronautics Director Susan Shea. "I hope I have the opportunity to come back and help celebrate the next opportunity for eco-

conomic development here. Mt. Vernon's a very important part of the aviation system, and I'm sure this (hangar) will be put to good use."

The facility is likely to be used not only for aircraft storage and maintenance, but also as a venue for trade shows and community events like June's Plane & Pilot LSA Expo. Collins said such versatility will help make the hangar a symbol of the continuing growth and vitality of the airport.

"Mt. Vernon and surrounding counties now have an asset that will be a beacon for future opportunities," he said.

County Board Chairman Robert White called Outland "one of the best-kept secrets in Southern Illinois," and Mayor Mary Jane Chesley agreed.

"This airport is a strong link in economic development. This hangar, light sport aircraft and all the activity going on here is phenomenal," she said. "Team Airport, you are on a roll. I applaud you for your success. Keep up the good work."

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