

ARC to be housed at Mt. Vernon Airport

BY APRIL TOLER

SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

MT. VERNON — Beginning this October, the American Red Cross of Mid-Southern Illinois Board of Directors will have a new home in a long-standing location; the Mt. Vernon Airport.

"We are excited about moving to the airport," said Cindy May, executive director, American Red Cross of Mid-Southern Illinois. "The airport offers our chapter an opportunity to be good stewards of the donated dollar and a long-term, spacious home for us."

The organization, currently located on Casey Avenue, is the first organization planned to move into three executive office suites being renovated at the Koziara Terminal, said Mt. Vernon Airport Manager Chris Collins.

The terminal, constructed in late

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Sentinel Photo/JASON SILVEY

MAKING IMPROVEMENTS — Ryan Fatheree, of J and R Mechanical, works on the duct insulation for the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system at the Mt. Vernon Outland Airport terminal. Ongoing renovations have turned the terminal into an ideal office rental space for businesses and organizations like the American Red Cross.

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1974, was originally designed as a modern airline terminal capable of accommodating large numbers of airline passengers, airport administration personnel, and restaurant patrons, according to Collins.

Deregulation of the scheduled airlines in the late 1970s, the interstate highway system, population trends, and economic factors made it hard for the building to be used as originally intended.

The 1999 loss of the Essential Air Service, Collins said, was considered the final nail in the terminal's coffin when it came to large amounts of passengers connecting into the aviation system via the airport.

In 2005, the airport decided to utilize the terminal's space by remodeling its southwest portion, adding three suites that will be available for "build-to-suit" long-term lease.

Currently the airport houses the terminal, Grandma's Landing Restaurant, Prudential Financial, Eric Evans Aviation, Ltd., ProjectResourcesIT, LLC, and the Jefferson County Composite Squadron of the Civil Patrol.

"The [renovation] plan is working," Collins said.

Although ARC is not part of the airport or a government agency — it relies solely on volunteers and donations from the community — May said being housed at the airport will prove beneficial.

"The airport's infrastructure makes it an ideal staging location for regional disaster relief missions should the need arise," she said. "It's just going to work out wonderfully."

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and counsels victims of disasters; provides nearly half of the nation's blood supply; teaches lifesaving skills; and supports military members and their families.

The local chapter houses Hamilton, Jefferson, Washington and Wayne counties.

For more information on the local chapter, contact the office at 244-2083.

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