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Submitted Photo

Richard Carney of SRT Aviation works on a jet engine at the company's location at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport. Carney and his crew took over the fixed-base operations at the airport on June 1 and have made huge strides during just over a month in business.

Increased sales fuel airport firm's hopes to add jobs

*Mt. Vernon in line to fuel
12,000 planes heading to
Wisconsin event*

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MT. VERNON — The company now handling fixed-base operations at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport has exceeded the expectations of airport officials.

SRT Aviation, which began operation June 1, increased fuel sales at the airport by 30 percent and notched 10,000 gallons sold in its first month of operation.

According to airport manager Chris Collins, the previous FBO sold about 100,000 gallons of fuel per year.

"Right now, they're on track for 120,000 gallons, and you have to remember their numbers for the first month were during a time of a pretty difficult transition," Collins said. "They have far exceeded our expectations on the line service, and as far as maintenance, we're very excited at what's happening here at the airport and the kind of potential we see."

The company, which employs two full-time and three part-time employees at present, is on target to meet its projections of employing at least nine people during its first

year and 15 within two years.

In addition, the company has augmented aircraft traffic by offering service, maintenance and repair.

Richard Carney of SRT said prior to the company's start-up that he would be able to attract fuel customers from corporate flight departments, air cargo operators and the U.S. military.

The group that forms SRT Aviation has a combined 125 years of experience. Carney, himself a turbine mechanic, said he and others involved in the company became interested in Mt. Vernon after working with Conquest Inc., which houses part of its jet business fleet at the

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facility.

Still in its infancy, the company has already attracted clients to the airport based on the credentials and character of its owners and currently has a small jet in the hangar undergoing about \$75,000 in repairs.

Collins said at least two major airports in other communities have already attempted to lure the team away from Mt. Vernon.

"We are very lucky to have this kind of opportunity," Collins said. "To have this kind of talent and experience is very special. As more and more days go by, you can see the growth. Aviation is a small world, and the word is really starting to get out. ... All of these guys have a pretty impressive customer list from where they were employed previously."

For Collins, the long-term goals of having the addition of a full-service FBO are to increase jet operations, secure increased funding for the airport and continue its growth for economic development.

"All of this helps in the long-term planning of the airport and ultimately translates to increased [Federal Aviation Administration] funding," Collins said.

One exciting addition that came directly from the involvement of SRT Aviation is advertising for fuel discounts for those traveling to the 2006 EAA AirVenture Oshkosh, the largest convention of its kind anywhere in the United States.

There will be about 12,000 planes flying into Wittman Regional Airport in Oshkosh, Wis., Collins said, and Mt. Vernon is in a direct line to provide fuel for those aircraft.

SRT Aviation and the Mt. Vernon Outland Airport have now placed information on the Web site dedicated to information on the convention and hope to attract a wave of new business from the event.

Collins said he is excited at the prospect of more and more people in the industry and in the community becoming aware of what the Mt. Vernon Outland Airport has to offer.

"Having these guys here and being able to offer what we're able to offer opens up some new doors for us," he said.