

MT VERNON AIRPORT

Airport hosts Fly-In

By **DEREK BEIGH**

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MT. VERNON — The Mt. Vernon Airport will host 200 to 250 gyroplane enthusiasts as the 29th annual St. Louis Rotorcraft Club Chapter 35 Fly-In comes to Jefferson County for the first time Aug. 26-28.

Airport Manager Chris Collins announced the event Tuesday at the Airport Authority's monthly meeting. He said Wednesday he expects it to be a major tourist boost for the city and surrounding area.

"Here at the airport we're trying to do anything we can to bring people to Mt. Vernon," Collins said.

The fly-in has been held since its inception at Shelbyville's Shelby County Airport. Collins said organizers decided to move the event to Mt. Vernon this

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year after visiting the 2010 Midwest Light Sport Aircraft Expo at the airport.

"They fell in love with the community, the amenities and the facilities," Collins said.

While Collins encourages Jefferson County residents to visit the airport and see the gyroplanes over the late-August weekend, he cautioned not to expect a guided tour.

"This is really for (the enthusiasts). They pick a place to fly their gyroplanes, meet up, talk and compare ma-

chines," he said. "But I'd love to see a lot of people come out to see the planes, shake hands and say, 'Welcome to Mt. Vernon. We're glad to have you.'"

In other business, the board:

■ approved financing for the previously-approved Jefferson County Heroes Memorial. The structure, which will be constructed on airport property before October by the airport in conjunction with Woodlawn Boy Scout Andrew Dreas, will be paid for in part by airport general funds that will be reimbursed through fundraisers throughout the summer and fall;

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■ approved the \$27,843 purchase of a new 2011 Chrysler Town and Country minivan for general airport use;

■ approved submission of paperwork to the Illinois Department of Transportation related to building a mandated perimeter fence around airport property. The \$1,205,550 project will be paid by the airport upfront and be 97.5 percent reimbursed, resulting in a local contribution of \$31,725. The 10-foot fence is expected to be completed by winter;

■ recognized scheduling of a special public budget meeting to be held at the airport Tuesday at 6 p.m.