

Airport Authority chooses local team to design, construct project

Innovation Park project will include new hangar, office extension

BY RICK HAYES

SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

MT. VERNON — Local businessman Brian Edmison was approved as the architect for the Innovation Park project at Mt. Vernon Outland-Airport on Tuesday.

Edmison will be working with Lipps Construction Co. — the team that produced the design and construction for the latest hangar project — on the Innovation Park project. Edmison's unannounced bid was approved by the Airport Authority commissioners over a bid submitted by Bassinger Group, based in Marion.

"Carey [Lipps] thinks we build the project on our budget," said Airport Manager Chris Collins. "He said we did it last time so there's no reason why we can't do it again."

The project will include the construction of a new 80 by 90 hangar with a 25 by 51 office extension and a ramp. The plans have been submitted to the Illinois Department of Transportation's Aeronautics Division for approval with financing still being negotiated through People's National Bank in Mt. Vernon. Collins said he is also still working with United States Department of Agriculture officials in case private financing falls through.

Todd Piper, Mt. Vernon city councilman and a member of the Branding Leadership Team, gave

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the commissioners a review of the branding study and the city's plans to move forward with the theme as the "Midwest City of Festivals," and the Broadway Market concept.

Commissioner Joe Bob Pierce questioned how the city would deal with parking at the former Armory location, where the Market will be located. Piper said he wasn't part of that conversation, but indicated there are several lots available to the rear of the Armory which could be utilized.

After Piper exited the meeting, Commissioner Mike Ancona said the Airport has been branding for several years, noting that at least 13 events are held annually at the facility, drawing visitors from coast to coast.

"I think we've been doing that for quite a few awhile," Ancona said. "The Airport has been riding this horse for at last the last six years. All they [the branding committee] have to do is sink us into what they want to do."

Collins responded, "It fits in well with branding. We've been a part of it all along [the process]."

IN OTHER BUSINESS:

- Commissioners approved

a tax levy ordinance for the 2012-2013 Fiscal year of \$114,730. Collins explained the levy had to be recalculated after the initial levy did not match up with last year's tax extension — the numbers Collins used to calculate this year's levy;

- Commissioners approved using Direct Energy as its third-party electric supplier, locking in a three-year rate, effective Aug. 1. Collins estimated the Airport could see a savings of \$7,800 over the period of the contract. The electric aggregation is being furnished through Global Energy Inc., a brokerage firm available locally through agent Wayne Hicks;

- Commissioners authorized Collins to allow a small group of employees to pursue payroll deductions for an insurance supplement program through Aflac. Cancer, term life, and disability plans can be purchased by employees if there are more than three employees interested in forming a group plan;

- And three unnamed full time employees were granted payroll increases, effective immediately.

Collins announced the Popular Rotor Craft Chapter 35 of St. Louis will conduct their Gyro Copter Fly-In on the weekend of Aug. 24-26; and plans are shaping up for the Plane and Pilot Expo to be held on the weekend of Sept. 6 through 8.

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COUNCILMAN TALKS BRANDING — Mt. Vernon City Councilman Todd Piper, FAR RIGHT, a member of the Branding Leadership Team, gives Airport Authority members a presentation on the city's branding study and its future plans. Listening, FROM LEFT, are Airport Manager Chris Collins and commissioners Joe Bob Pierce and Mike Ancona.