



Sentinel Photo/RICK HAYES

**AIRPORT GROUNDBREAKING** — Members of the Mt. Vernon Airport Authority and local dignitaries participated in the groundbreaking for the new hangar at the airport. **FROM LEFT:** Mike Ancona, Airport Authority chairman; Gary Chesney, board member; Greg Martin; board member; Paul Dickerson; board member; Mayor Mary Jane Chesley; Airport Authority Manager Chris Collins; Jefferson County Board Chairman Ted Buck; State Sen. John O. Jones; Dennis McEnaney, city council member; and John Scott, Jefferson County Circuit Clerk.

# Groundbreaking held for new hangar

**BY RICK HAYES**

MT. VERNON MANAGING EDITOR

**MT. VERNON** — Despite threatening weather conditions, the first spade of dirt was turned on Thursday — a week later than planned — for the groundbreaking of an 11,400 square foot hangar at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport.

When completed in the fall, the hangar will be the first building constructed on airport property in 18 years. The last building was erected in 1992.

“We’re really proud to be doing this today, and we’re proud to have all these people here today that have an interest in the airport,” said Airport Authority Chairman Mike Ancona. “We have great things coming as we go down the road for aviation ... in over 80 years you’ve seen what commercial aviation has done. The people here, the staff here are not afraid to step out and say, ‘We’ve never done that before.’ You know what, we’re doing it.”

“I want to thank the airport authority, from manager Chris Collins on down to very strong members who have

worked as a team to get this accomplishment done,” said Mayor Mary Jane Chesley. “We can see their plan following into place, not only with this hangar, but also with Light Sport Aircraft Show. We have partnerships forming here, as well as the teamwork of the airport. Mt. Vernon certainly does appreciate it. The airport is a valuable tool for Jefferson County and the city of Mt. Vernon.”

“I was raised right here and I remember when this used to be a cornfield. In fact, I probably put up hay in this field,” said Jefferson County Chairman Ted Buck. “This is a big event to me, being a pilot and serving all those years flying an airplane.”

Buck said the airport was established by Earl Outland, making it into an airport that has plenty of room for expansion.

“Chris Collins [airport manager] and his board are doing an excellent job of maintaining a viable airport and improving the conditions. I just wish him luck, and keep doing it,” he said.

State Sen. John O. Jones

said the airport is a valuable part of the community.

“We can’t grow the community without a viable airport,” he said.

Lipps Construction is the general contractor for the project. Carey Lipps, also the project manager, expects to be starting site work early next week, he told the Airport Authority at its regular monthly meeting on Monday night. The total cost of the project is \$636,000. A 23,100 square foot aircraft ramp extension will be constructed west of the hangar, which will be located south of a hangar next to the airport terminal.

Black & Sons was awarded the bid for plumbing and KT Electric will do the electrical work.

The hangar is capable of housing one regional airliner, four to six medium size business jets or up to 12 single engine airplanes. Collins has said the hangar will be large enough for commercial airplanes, such as the Bombardier CRJ 700 and the Grumman Gulfstream 550.

*rhayes@morningsentinel.com*