

MT. VERNON AIRPORT

# Volunteers needed for LSA expo

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MT. VERNON — The Mt. Vernon Airport is seeking volunteers to help welcome more than 1,000 light sport aircraft enthusiasts to the third annual Plane & Pilot Midwest LSA Expo Sept. 9, 10 and 11.

“We want people coming from out of town to see our community at its best,” said Airport Manager Chris Collins. “We simply can’t put this event on without volunteer help. It’s too big, and there are too many roles.”

Those roles, which will number about 50, will include gatekeepers to take \$8 admission to the main exhibitor hall and spotters to prevent attendees from wandering into the path of test flights. Each volunteer will be given a red polo shirt with airport insignia to keep.

Collins said finding quality volunteers will be especially crucial to the success of this year’s Expo, projected to

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be the largest yet thanks to a new partnership between the event and Los Angeles-based Plane & Pilot magazine.

“Plane & Pilot has a subscriber base of about 100,000, and we’ve had a half-page ad in there all year leading up to the event,” he said.

Collins said keeping the

Expo well-stocked with volunteers will not only keep the event running smoothly but also encourage attendees to return to Mt. Vernon, both for future Expos and other tourism.

“When I go to the other (aircraft) shows, people who have been here (for this event) say, ‘Boy, I sure wish this show was like yours. Everybody’s so friendly, and people are always checking to make sure we don’t need water or a sandwich.’ That’s huge for us,” he said. “We’ve got additional exposure that should translate to additional attendees, which means more

people coming to our community and staying in hotels and eating in restaurants. You’ll be an ambassador for Mt. Vernon, Jefferson County and Southern Illinois.”

While Collins doesn’t expect most of the Expo to interest non-enthusiast volunteers, he added that history buffs will want to see the 1934 Monocoupe housed by SRT Aviation at the airport that previously stood at St. Louis’ Lambert Field and the Missouri History Museum after being flown by Charles Lindbergh.

“It’s a one-of-a-kind piece of history,” Collins said.

Collins hopes that display, among other more niche additions, will help the show not only break but shatter attendance records — but he can’t do it alone.

“We had 750 (attendees) the first year and 1000 last year, so with the additional advertising the optimist in me thinks we can break 1,500 and maybe hit 2,000,” he said. “This is your chance to come out and be an ambassador for your community and do your part to welcome these folks to Mt. Vernon.”

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