

CTA holds annual picnic at Outland Airport



Sentinel Photo/TIM JOHNSON

ANYONE FOR TENNIS? — Selena Vaughn swings her virtual racket as she plays Nintendo Wii Tennis at the Continental Tire picnic on Monday at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport.

Families eat, children play on cool Labor Day holiday

BY TIM JOHNSON
SENTINEL NEW STAFF

MT. VERNON — Continental Tire the Americas employees and their families gathered at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport on Labor Day for the company's annual picnic, enjoying food, fun and games on a cool, windy holiday.

Smoke from grilling hamburgers wafted through the air along the slope of the airport lake shore as children lined up to play in inflatable fun houses and families sat on the grass and under the big tent to eat, chat, and mingle with other employees and

their families.

CTA employee Toby Maxham came to the picnic with his wife and step-daughter, Selena Vaughn, to introduce her to his friends from work and let her work off some energy in the fun houses and on the Nintendo Wii games.

As Selena swung her virtual racket during a game of tennis, Maxham said the pair were enjoying the weather, which had felt like the height of summer just a few days earlier.

"I'd rather it be a little cooler than hot," he said. "This is perfect weather for it. It's just a chance for us to do get out of the house and do something."

The event also featured a face painting booth, bingo games, raffles and a car show.

Airport Director Chris Collins was busy directing traffic into the parking lot at noon, though volun-

teers from the Mt. Vernon Township High School Future Farmers of America club did most of that work.

"The FFA kids just do an excellent job," he said. "I want to get them back here for other events."

The Woodlawn High School cheerleading team and coaches also volunteered to help direct activities and serve food.

CTA has held the picnic at the airport since 2005 and the event typically draws about 3,000 people each year, Collins estimated. Aside from the annual Salute to Freedom fireworks display, the Continental Tire picnic is the airport's day of the year.

"It's just a wonderful use of our airport," said Collins of the all-day gathering. "We want to be able to give back, and this is a great way to do it."

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