

START YOUR ENGINES



Sentinel File Photo/JASON SILVEY

In the pit, model boat racers get their nitro-methane fueled engines revving while others navigate their boats from the grandstand at the RC boat regatta last year at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport.

Model boats return to Airport

Two clubs uniting for weekend racing

BY RICK HAYES

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MT. VERNON — Members of the River City Racing Club had so much fun in Mt. Vernon last summer, they've decided to come back for a return engagement.

This year, the Indiana-based club is hooking up with the St. Louis Thunderboaters for racing this weekend at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport.

"This is the second year that we've done it. Last year, we did it by ourselves. This year we're getting some help from Thunderboaters," said event organizer Ryan Hobby. "We'll have drivers from as far away as Chicago, St. Louis and Evansville, and maybe as far as Memphis."

Racers will test their model

boats on Friday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. and racing will begin at 9 a.m. on both Saturday and Sunday.

"Everybody that came to Mt. Vernon enjoyed it last year. They were very accommodating and a good central location for us in the United States. That's what makes it fun to go there as well," said Hobby.

Last year marked the first year in eight that model boats raced on the airport waters.

"They raced here last year at the airport and had a good time and a lot of people came out and watched so the board said, 'yes, let's do it.' It's something a little different," said Airport Manager Chris Collins.

"They're just using a small portion of lake. They're only running in that area northeast of ARDL, around that curve there; around the same area that everybody watches the fireworks," Collins added.

The River City Racing Club, which is based in Evansville, Ind., is an International Model Powerboat Association sanctioned club

which was founded in 1981.

"We have about 20 members, and I'm guessing the St. Louis club has about the same," Hobby said.

Seventy-five to 100 boats are expected to compete in 18 different classes with speeds on the lake ranging from 40 to 90 mph.

The classes include: B hydro, D hydro, open hydro, sport 20, sport 40, 1/8 scale, B sport tunnel, B modified tunnel, open tunnel, B mono, D mono, open nitro mono, gas hydro, gas mono, gas sport hydro, gas cat, classic thunderboat and sport RTR.

The event is free to the public. Grandma's Landing will be open on Friday and Sunday, but closed on Saturday. Race enthusiasts are encouraging people to bring their own refreshments and canopies.

"We would suggest bringing a cooler full of water, because it's going to be hot," said Hobby. "If you've got a tent or hobby, there should be plenty of room to set it up too."

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