



STATE OF THE AIRPORT FY 2016/2017

AIRGO, INCORPORATED

In July, 2016, Mt. Vernon Outland Airport was selected as the first Satellite Base for AIRGO Incorporated located in Centralia, Illinois. The company specializes in flight training of airline pilots with direct placement in Chinese Airlines.

Chinese airspace is limited to the Chinese Military and the airlines. Flight training simply does not exist in China. Infrastructure is being developed rapidly – including aviation. Various sources estimate 1000 – 2000 professionally trained pilots will be needed for each of the next twenty years!

There are approximately 130 students in Centralia, Mt. Vernon, and Marion currently. Airgo would like to see 500 students based in southern Illinois.

The AIRGO program takes the student from zero time to Commercial Multi-Engine in 18 months. Graduates complete the curriculum with 50 hours of high altitude, twin turboprop training, also at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport.

DE/ANTI ICING TRUCK

Mt. Vernon Outland Airport obtained a state of the art De/Anti Ice Truck in August, 2016. The airport's "just in time" cargo carriers require de/anti icing services for winter operations. The 1997 Trump 2000 De-Anti Ice Truck is built on a Ford F-700 Chassis. The truck features an independent hydraulic/heating system powered by a separate six cylinder engine located in the rear compartment. Three on-board tanks store 1400 gallons of Type I De-Ice Fluid and 600 gallons of Type IV Anti-Ice Fluid. The truck's boom extends to 41 feet and its platform includes separate nozzles for both types of fluids. Airport officials claim there simply is not an aircraft too large for the Trump 2000.

LAKE SHELTER

Also In August, 2016, Boy Scout Eagle Candidate Jason Barciszewski and his father Mr. Brian Barciszewski were thanked publicly for spearheading a badly needed project. Under Jason's leadership the lake shore shelter now has a new metal roof, structural repairs completed, new stain, and new bird netting. Jason also pressure washed all components, stained the picnic tables, restored the BBQ Grills, and even constructed a new reflection bench. The reflection bench is mounted in its own concrete pad under a shade tree on the lake shore. Airport officials thanked the Barciszewski's and mentioned their timing: *"If the project had not been completed this year, the airport may not have had a lake shore shelter to restore."*

LOSSES

The airport experienced the loss of two local aviators in late Summer/early Fall, 2016. Ultralight pilot Jason Pearson perished in an accident south of the airport in August 30, 2016. Jason loved aviation and worked as a crew chief for several different airshow acts across the country and Canada. Airport volunteer and ultralight pilot Steve Watts passed away on September 27, 2016. Steve assisted the airport maintenance department with nearly anything that needed done around the airfield. Steve was the caretaker of the airport's two grass runways utilized during the Midwest LSA Expo. Both Jason and Steve will be missed.

FIREBAUGH DRIVE

On October 11th, 2016, airport officials recognized the service and dedication of former Airport Manager Max Firebaugh by naming the western access road - Firebaugh Drive. Firebaugh managed Mt. Vernon Outland Airport from 1966 – 1988. He passed away on December 31, 2011.

With the exception of his military service and college, Firebaugh was a lifelong Mt. Vernon resident. Firebaugh flew 69 missions over Europe in a B-26 Marauder near the end of World War II. He retired from the United States Air Force with the rank of Lt. Colonel. For his efforts, Firebaugh was awarded the Air Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters, the European, Mediterranean, and African Campaign Medal with three Battle Stars, several other military commendations, and the Purple Heart Medal.

The Mt. Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners voted to name a road in honor of Firebaugh a few years ago. After the development of Innovation Park in the southwest quadrant, it was only fitting to name the entry road in Firebaugh's honor. Innovation Park is where local aviation history meets the future. It is the very area where Firebaugh started his local career, Ozark Airlines connected Mt. Vernon to the world, and where the airport desires to launch new aviation related entities. Firebaugh joins the other pillars of the airport – Earl Outland and Stan Koziara – each having their name affixed permanently to airport infrastructure.

BALLOONS OVER MT. VERNON

The 4th Annual Balloons Over Mt. Vernon, held in late October, 2016 was a huge success. Balloon glows and after-glow movies were held on Friday and Saturday Nights. Residents enjoyed the Saturday car show, United Way Pancake Breakfast, Young Eagle Rides, RC Boat Races, and Craft Fair. A large crowd greeted the Hooah Deer Hunt for Heroes/First Responder Parade followed by a salute to Vietnam Veterans. Lt. Colonel Ted Buck, USAF Retired, and Mr. Greg Baker, fellow Vietnam Veteran and Gold Legacy VFW Member from Indiana, were the keynote speakers.

AVIONICS INSTALLATION & REPAIR

In December, airport officials reported that Mt. Vernon Outland Airport based FAA Certified Repair Station SRT Aviation, is on the forefront of the new FAA mandated ADS-B Transponder technology. By January 1, 2020, all aircraft operating in Class A, B, C, and international airspace must be equipped with new Automatic Dependent Surveillance Broadcast transponders. ADS-B technology provides better tracking ability for air traffic controllers. It provides pilots with collision avoidance, nearly real time graphical/text weather, and Notices to Airman (NOTAMS) in the cockpit. SRT Aviation has secured dealerships with several leading manufacturers. The company has already completed several transponder, GPS, and auto-pilot system installations.

AVIATION REPORT

The Annual Aviation Report for calendar year 2016 was published in February, 2017. Total operations decreased a whopping 22.6% over the previous year (21,102 in 2016 as compared to 27,270 in 2015). The airport believes the decrease is a direct reflection of reduced corporate flying activity by based tenants, aircraft being sold, and the poor image of the State of Illinois. The based aircraft count remains stable due to Airgo joining the family in 2016. Total based inventory is 51 (41 Single Engine Land, 7 Multi-Engine Land, and 3 Helo). Airport officials expect a strong rebound on the operational side next year because of Airgo's Mt. Vernon Outland Airport Satellite being at full strength.