

Airport prepares for AirVenture Cup Race

*A public open house
will be held on July 20*

BY JOSH JONES

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MT. VERNON — The Mt. Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners heard an update in regards to the upcoming Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) AirVenture Cup Race.

According to the AirVenture Cup Race website, this year marks the 22nd annual AirVenture Cup Cross-Country Air Race which will take place at 9 a.m. on July 21, from Mt. Vernon to Wausau, Wisconsin, with several intermediate turning points creating a course of 400 plus nautical miles. Pilots will start to arrive on July 19. The race launches at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport every odd-numbered year. In the even-numbered years the event launches out of Mitchell, South

Dakota.

"I can't believe it is here already," said Chris Collins, airport director. "I talked to the race organizer and we are looking at probably 70 race airplanes and 20 support and it is a diversified field this year."

Mt. Vernon Outland Airport will host a public open house from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday July 20. Admission to the event is free and the public is encouraged to visit and meet and greet the race pilots and see the aircrafts.

The event will also feature free Young Eagles airplane rides from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The event is for children ages eight to 17 and parent/guardian permission is required. Collins explained that in the past they have seemed to have a low turnout for the rides.

"I think a lot of it has to do with it being in the summer and we don't have the opportunity to promote through the schools.

Collins said that they have gone through other avenues to help

promote the event including social media. He highly encouraged promoting the event in order to get a bigger turnout.

"We are going to see how well that fares," Collins said. "These folks want to get up to the almost 200 range. When we don't do more than 100 they are asking what is wrong? Where is the turnout? Where are the kids? So, we are hoping we can get kids here this year."

Collins said that they are currently in need of volunteers for the event. It was noted that they will be taking pilots to the Granada for a happy hour event when they arrive and then transporting them to local hotels.

"We need help, we always need help, we have a lot of guests that are going to be here," Collins said. "This is another one of those events where you get to be an ambassador for Southern Illinois, Mt. Vernon and Jefferson County."

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Sentinel File Photo

AIRVENTURE CUP RACE — Mt. Vernon Outland Airport is preparing to host another AirVenture Cup Race. This year's race will kick off on July 21, with an open house for people to meet the pilots and see the planes on July 20 at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport. Mt. Vernon plays host to the starting line for the event every other year.

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Collins explained the importance of having the event at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport.

"This is just a big deal, it is a big deal for our airport, it is a big deal for our area," Collins said. "Like I say every year, there is only one starting line and one finish line."

For more information on the event or to find out how to volunteer people may contact the airport at 242-7016.

IN OTHER BUSINESS

The board opted to renew the local government health plan for one year.

The board approved Hanson Professional Services Inc. of Springfield for a retainer agreement for engineering services for five years.

The board heard an update on various airport projects.

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