

Airport board hears annual report

*Airport took in \$516,978
and spent \$507,300 in
general operations*

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MOUNT VERNON — The Mount Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners recently heard the annual aviation report and various highlights of the airport for the past year.

According to information provided by Certified Public Accountant Richard David Kieffer, the airport authority's total assets exceeded its liabilities by over \$6.3 million (net assets) for the fiscal year as compared to over \$6.7 million reported in the prior fiscal year. The authority's total net assets decreased by \$349,279 or 5.19 percent, over the course of this year's operations as compared to a decrease of \$475,279 the prior fiscal

year.

"It is all attributable to depreciation expense, in which we started this year \$572,000 in the hole," said Airport Director Chris Collins. "We just have a tremendous amount of assets here that are depreciating."

Collins explained how the airport fared regarding the general operations final budget. Numbers show that the airport took in \$516,978 and spent \$507,300.

"We had a good year, we made \$9,678. We made a little bit more than we said we were going to make and we spent almost right about where we said we were going to spend. We got to be happy with that in this kind of economy," Collins said. "We are not a for profit business, we are a government entity, so you don't want to budget for a huge amount of profit."

The annual aviation report shows that total operations increased from \$26,030 in 2018 to \$27,333 in 2019, a five percent increase.

"This is a direct reflection of a lot of things that are going well here at

the airport," Collins said. "We have a great fixed base operation, which is the entity that does aircraft maintenance. There are a lot of airplanes coming here for maintenance. There are people coming here for flight training, that is contributing to these numbers going up."

Collins also explained AirGo and Bonnie Cafe's impact at the airport.

"AirGo, our international flight training school, was very active the first six months of the year. They kind of took a step kind of in retreat the second part of the year, but they had a lot positive numbers the first six months," Collins said. "The Bonnie Cafe opened and the Bonnie Cafe drew a lot of aircraft, including the military. That is a direct reflection of guys coming in here and eating in the restaurant. When they come and eat at the restaurant they buy fuel here. So a lot of things are really working and that is what is propelling our numbers upward."

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Based inventory at the airport dropped from 53 to 45 aircrafts, which was attributed to AirGo taking their entire single engine and multi engine fleet back to Centralia. Collins said that lack of flight instructors is a major reason behind that decision.

"They moved their primary flight training program that we had here back up there for the time being," Collins said. "We expect that to come back, we just don't know when. They went down

in instruction staff and it has taken them that much time to recapture. I have been told they have hired some new instructors and are hoping to get back to the numbers and strength they had before."

One of the biggest highlights for the year included Terminal Aerodrome Forecast (TAF), where airport officials worked with the National Weather Service (NWS) in Paducah, Kentucky, to establish a terminal Aerodrome Forecast for the airport. NWS forecasters will generate a forecast for the airport four times daily. The TAF helps pilots plan for arrivals and departures into and out of the airport.

"We are still the only airport outside the metro east in the entire Southern Illinois region that has this," Collins said.

Other 2019 highlights included rehabilitating a 1950's era T hangar, continuing to work with AirGo, Incorporated, Avionics Installation and Repair, domestic flight training, installation and dedication of a concept jet, the AirVenture Cup Race, the Midwest LSA Expo, other various events, signing over Summersville Park to the Summersville Grade School and welcoming the Mount Vernon Soccer Club to play on the green space at the airport. 2/14/20
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