

# Airgo keeps flying but in holding pattern

*No new Chinese students can attend with travel ban*

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CENTRALIA — The Airgo aviation training facility in Centralia is continuing to train its current batch of students but no new students have been able to attend from China with the travel ban in place.

“Trump won’t allow a Chinese airline into the country, so unfortunately we’re backed up to about three groups waiting to come over,” said Airgo Vice President Norman Wolfe.

Airgo trains students from China Southern Airlines. The flight students are enrolled in a 14-month course and typically don’t return home to China until they graduate from the program, Sentinel archives state.

*“We’re just in what we call a holding pattern with them. It’s been at a standstill for several months and I’m not sure what the future holds.”*

**CHRIS COLLINS**

MOUNT VERNON OUTLAND AIRPORT DIRECTOR



The facility specializes in Professional Flight Training from Sport Pilot through Airline Transport Pilot (ATP), aircraft sales and service, and all related fixed base operation services, states the Airgo website.

Wolfe said the COVID-19 pandemic has not really interrupted the training for the current group of students in the program. The current group just completed their high perfor-

mance ground school and now have to go through high performance training in the air, utilizing a large aircraft known as “King Air.” Each student has to do 20 hours of training in the air, Wolfe said.

“It hasn’t interrupted the training per se (but) it is interrupting the flow of students coming over,” Wolfe said.

Please see **Airgo**, Page 2A

## Airgo:

*Continued from Page 1A*

There are strict guidelines related to COVID-19 if a student has to go to a local hospital, Wolfe said. In one case, a student had to have his appendix removed at a local hospital and as soon as he came out of the hospital he had to quarantine alone in a house for 14 days.

Wolfe’s major concern with COVID-19 is the future of the program as the current travel ban on China means that no new batch of students will be coming to Airgo in the near future. Once the current batch of students graduates, no new students would be coming in until the ban is lifted.

“As far as the program, it has no impact on it at all but if we don’t get the students over here, we won’t have any students,” Wolfe said.

Mount Vernon Outland Airport Director Chris Collins also remarked on the status of Airgo’s training program Friday. Airgo has satellite bases in Mount Vernon, Marion and is opening one in Glendale.

“We’re just in what we call a holding pattern with them,” Collins said. “It’s been at a standstill for several months and I’m not sure what the future holds.”

Airgo’s main office and fixed base operation is located in Centralia. For more information on the agency, call 533-1643.

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7-25-2020