

New Flight Simulation Laboratory announced

The hope is to have the simulator ready by the end of the month

BY JOSH JONES

SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

MOUNT VERNON — Safe Aviation Educators (SAE) is partnering with Mount Vernon Outland Airport to establish and promote a new Flight Simulation Laboratory.

According to a press release, the centerpiece of the laboratory is the new Redbird SD Simulator, which SAE will have displayed inside of the Koziara Terminal for the airport to utilize. The Redbird SD is a top choice for flight schools needing an affordable, fully enclosed Advanced Aviation Training Device. With its wrap-around visual system, the Redbird SD provides immersive flight

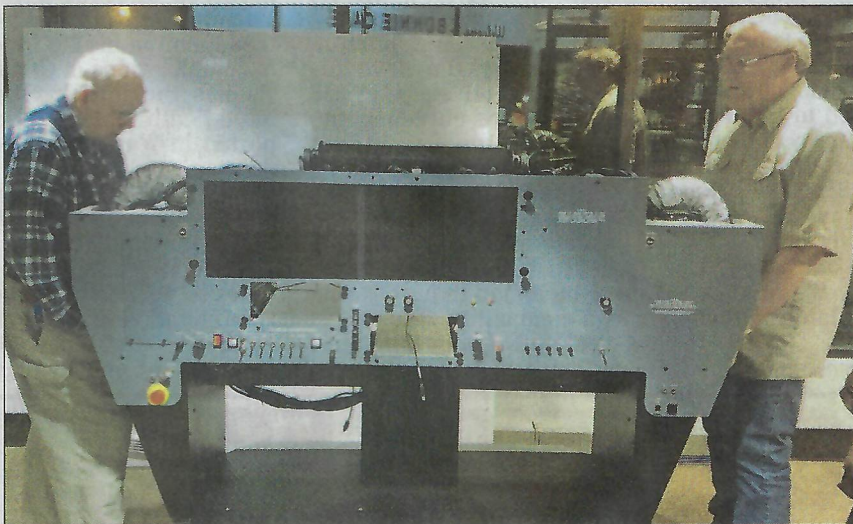
training. The SD provides a government-approved, fully enclosed, visually stunning flight simulator for less than the price of a new SUV.

Leland Widick, owner of SAE, has been involved in aviation education for many years. He said that he did his graduate studies in computer aided instruction with a simulation specialty and was the chief flight instructor for Southern Illinois University Carbondale for 20 years. Widick said that he saw a need for simulation training in general aviation.

"I always felt that general aviation per se was lacking in the area of simulation," Widick said. "Airlines have used it for years, the military has used it for years and it is quite an enhancement, it actually shortens the training time for an individual."

SAE is a flight training specialty company based at the airport. Widick said the nice thing about a simulator is that it offers a simpler way for people to train that does not rely on the weather or having access to a plane. The Redbird SD will allow based student and regional pilots a realistic tool to learn and practice concepts on the ground as well as allow pilots to train techniques and scenarios that may be too dangerous in a real aircraft. Instructors can continue teaching during poor weather and FAA required recurrent training (instrument approaches) can occur at approximately half the cost of using an actual aircraft.

"The simulator will be a tool utilized not only for basic training, but for recurrent training. It can be used as a link for career possibilities with high schools, junior high schools, it



Sentinel Photo/JOSH JONES

FLIGHT SIMULATOR — Leland Widick, owner of Safe Aviation Educators, LEFT, and Dan Dare, electronic technician for Mt. Vernon Communications begin to set up the Redbird SD Simulator Tuesday at Mount Vernon Outland Airport. Once ready the flight simulator will offer an immersive training experience to pilots across the region.



Chris Collins

is limitless in its scope," Widick said. "I am very excited about this expansion into this area and very proud to team up with team Mount Vernon to be able to deliver this service."

Airport Director Chris Collins said that he is excited that aviation professionals are seeing the potential that Mount Vernon Outland Airport has in the region and that they are willing to invest and be a part of the team.

"This is a quantum leap forward for area flight students, pilots, and instructors," Collins said. "Opportunities like this are only found at university aviation programs or professional pilot training centers. Thank you Leland Widick for making this possible."

Mount Vernon Airport Authority Board Chairman Marty Cox said that they are pleased that Widick has agreed to this partnership.

"This is just an excellent addition to our airport and our flight training program," Cox said. "This is going to enhance our flight program tremendously."

Collins and Widick said that the goal is to have the simulator up and running by the end of the month if not sooner.

jjones@morningsentinel.com

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