

Airport gives project updates

The airport is researching various grant opportunities

BY JOSH JONES

SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

MOUNT VERNON — The Mount Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners recently gave an update on the current status of several projects planned for the airport.

Airport Director Chris Collins began the update by discussing the Koziara Terminal parking lot rehabilitation project. The scope of work includes fixing all the curbs, feeder roads, crack fillings, remarking of Aviation and

Firebaugh Drive, rehabilitating the entire parking lot and more. He said that Governor J.B. Pritzker along with the Illinois Department of Transportation recently announced \$94 million from Rebuild Illinois to revitalize airports. If approved the airport would pay 10% of the project's cost.

"We are very hopeful that our parking lot project will be our number one project picked up and 100% funded," Collins said. "Again that is nearly a \$1 million total cost and our local would be \$100,000."

Collins said that they are able to submit multiple projects for the grant and that they would also be requesting funds for a new fire truck, estimated at approximately \$300,000.

"Our current fire truck is a 2004 model year, so it is coming up on its 20 year life," Collins said. "I talked to the FAA about that before the last inspection. Because we don't have an operating airline here it is not a red

flag item for them as long as it is still working and operational. It is in great shape, the firefighters over there take great care in maintaining it and it is a good piece of equipment, but looking into the future we need to plan for down the road."

When asked about the fire truck's resale value, Collins said that he will have to look into that.

To be eligible for the grant, airports must be for public use and included in the Illinois Aviation System Plan. Applications are due June 14 to be eligible for a total of \$94 million to be released later this year with a maximum of \$25 million for individual awards.

The airport applied for a grant for the replacement of the Innovation Park sanitary sewer and utility upgrade project, replacing a 50 plus year old cast iron sewer pipe. Collins said that the airport recently



Chris Collins

heard the results after a submitting a grant to U.S. Congressman Mike Bost's office for a Community Project Funding program grant.

"That project was not selected for the Community Project Funding Grant. Staffers said that there were over 200 projects submitted, there was enough money to fund 10 of them and ours was not selected," Collins said. "We were encouraged to reapply again next year, as it is going to be an annual opportunity and to let the congressman's office know if we picked up funding from another source."

Collins said that he is continuing to work with the Greater Egypt Regional Planning and Development Commission to apply for an Economic Development Administration grant for the construction of a big box hangar as the airport continues to grow. He estimated that a 100-by-100 foot building would be somewhere in the \$1 million range. Collins said to qualify for the grant the airport has to show clear economic development and growth. The airport has grown from 62 jobs, 33 stored aircraft and four tenants in 2005 to 140 jobs, 52 stored aircraft and 16 tenants in 2019.

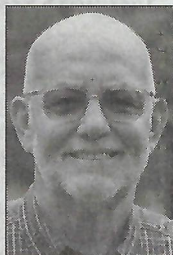
"We are definitely moving in the right direction," Collins said.

Board Chairman Marty Cox stated that he was impressed with everything that is being planned for the future at Mount Vernon Outland Airport.

"Just imagine what Earl Outland (original founder) would think if he were sitting here tonight," Cox said. "He would be on cloud nine."

Collins said that they plan to go over the entire infrastructure of the airport to determine what the airport will need in the near and distant future.

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Marty Cox

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