

Midwest LSA Expo returns this weekend

There will be recognitions, seminars and various aircraft featured

BY JOSH JONES

SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

MOUNT VERNON — People from across the country will either drive or fly into Mount Vernon Outland Airport as the Midwest LSA Expo returns today.

The expo will take place from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. today through Saturday at the airport. Midwest LSA Expo, Inc. specifically organized the unique event to sell Light Sport

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Sentinel File Photo

LSA EXPO — Jeremy and Daniela Knoll show off the BushCat aircraft during last year's Midwest LSA Expo at Mount Vernon Outland Airport. They are the United States distributor for the aircraft which is made in South Africa. This year's expo starts from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday and will continue through Saturday at the airport.

Expo:

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Aircraft (LSA), LSA Ancillary Services and LSA related Services, according to its website.

"I can't thank the volunteers enough, they showed up at 8 o'clock in the morning (Tuesday), ready to work," said Airport Director Chris Collins. "Everything is set up, it is noon (Wednesday) and everything doesn't start until (today). We can't do that without these guys and gals and Sheila (Jolly-Scrivner, airport administrative assistant) and I are just incredibly thankful for the effort by everybody."

Approximately 35 vendors are expected at this year's expo. Various seminars will be held inside the corporate hangar of the airport. Though this is considered an aviation industry event the public is invited to look at the various aircraft and welcome visitors to the community.

Collins said that a special honor will be awarded on Friday.

"The FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) will be here at 11 a.m. Friday to

present the Wright Brothers Master Pilot award to Ray Xanders. He is a local flight instructor and retired corporate pilot," Collins said.

"The Wright Brothers Master Pilot award is really special. You only get it if you have 50 continual years of safe flying."

Because this year's expo lands on Sept. 11 the airport is planning to host a brief 9/11 remembrance. At 10:30 a.m. Kash Helicopter Services will do a flyby displaying the American flag along the interstate and at 11 a.m. will return to the airport when the ceremony is held. Rebecca Vinyard will sing the National Anthem.

"Instead of doing a full-blown ceremony with speakers, I just thought it would be great to have the entire industry sing the National Anthem together," Collins said. "Ms. Rebecca Vinyard is going to lead us and I am going to encourage everyone to join in."

Mount Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commission-



Chris Collins

ers President Marty Cox gave his thoughts on the eve of the expo.

"I think we have everything in place, a lot of good help to get things ready and it appears the weather is going to cooperate this year," Cox said. "We are looking forward to three good days of aviation fun."

Collins said that this is a chance for the community to show those visiting their hospitality.

"This is a chance for everyone in our town to be an ambassador for our town and Southern Illinois," Collins said. "There are going to be a lot of visitors, not just for the expo, but for Cedarhurst (Art & Craft Fair) and everyone should put the welcome mat out for the visitors. They have spent money and time to come to Mount Vernon and we want to show them that we are grateful and thankful for them to be here and help them while they are here."

The airport will continue to follow CDC and IDPH guidelines. Hand sanitizer will be available. For more information or to inquire about volunteering the public may call (618) 242-7060.

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