

Airport hears annual Aviation Report

*2021 marked a strong
year for the airport*

BY JOSH JONES

SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

MOUNT VERNON — The Mount Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners recently heard the Mount Vernon Outland Airport Aviation Report for 2021.

Airport Director Chris Collins said that the airport saw 26,696 operations in 2021.

"That is up 8.7% over the 2020 numbers," Collins said.

Collins said that the report has some big takeaways, but noted that the airport did not see many big moments such as a big military presence or major aircraft coming in during 2021. He said it was a year filled with consistent operations, with one of the biggest takeaways regarding the Corporate Aircraft Association (CAA).

"The biggest takeaway, we had 75 Corporate Aircraft Association airplanes or 150 CAA operations," Collins said. "That is 75 airplanes that would not have stopped here without the airport being in the fuel program."

According to Sentinel archives, the program gives negotiated Jet A Fuel Pricing to pilots who choose to stop at CAA member airports.

Collins said that another highlight was the tremendous amount of airplanes that fly in to eat at the Bonnie Cafe.

"These are airplanes that are based in neighboring airports or across the river in St. Louis. Some of them were here 20/30 times," Collins said. "These folks are spending money here, they are buying meals at Bonnie Cafe and then some of them buy aviation fuel while they are here. That is money from other places that is spent directly here in Jefferson County, because of Bonnie Cafe and the airport."

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Collins said the airport is the base for 34 single engine land airplanes, five multi-engine land airplanes, one jet and six helicopters totaling 46 aircraft based at the airport.

"The Honda Jet that is here helps with our regional classification. We have two PAFA 46 T Turboprops that joined the family in calendar year 2021 and we have three Cirrus SR22s here now," Collins said.

The airport also reported 262 jet operations in 2021, compared to 212 in 2020.

Collins said that it is just great to see the amount of operations at the airport. He said that numbers are still looking good going into 2022 as this was the busiest January they have had in years.

"We had 38 jet operations in January 2022, six cargo flights and three pretty significant airplanes," Collins said. "That was a January to remember. ... We really have some dedicated and knowledgeable people around here."

IN OTHER BUSINESS:

- The board approved

\$12,485 for workman's compensation insurance renewal, which is \$550 less from last year.

- The board approved the purchase of a Ford F-150 maintenance truck from Morrow Brothers Ford in Greenfield, Illinois, at \$40,970. Collins said that while they attempted to shop local they could not get a price that would fit their budget.

- The board approved a budget of \$100,000 to purchase a Cessna 172 airplane, due to the ongoing success of the Flight School program at the airport.

- The board and Air Evac honored Dave Williams for his 18 years of maintenance work for Air Evac and nearly 40 years of aviation service in Southern Illinois.

- The board recognized Fast Truck repair for fixing the airport's jet fuel truck in less than a day after the truck had broken down.

- The board recognized Larry Hodges and Brian Johnson for their emergency HVAC repairs at the airport.

- The board recognized Kimley-Horn's assistance with receiving FAA classification matters.

- The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) received a bid for the prime-

ter access road project. The one bid received was noted to be significantly lower than the engineer's estimate.

- The board received other

project updates.

- The board approved equipment updates for a fuel truck at \$82,592 from American Refueler Equipment

Company out of Birmingham, Alabama.

- The audit report was tabled until next month.

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Submitted Photo

GIVING RECOGNITION — Commissioner Mike Ancona, FRONT LEFT, along with the rest of the Mount Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners, recognized Retiree Dave Williams, FRONT RIGHT, for his 18 years of maintenance work for Air Evac and nearly 40 years of aviation service in Southern Illinois. Pictured, BACK FROM LEFT, are Commissioner Gary Chesney, Chairman Marty Cox, Commissioner Carey Lipps, Airport Director Chris Collins and Commissioner Greg Martin.

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