



## Airport to launch Momentum 2026 Plus

*Officials will soon embark on the capital development plan*

**BY JOSH JONES**  
SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

**MOUNT VERNON** — The Mount Vernon Airport Authority (MVAA) Board of Commissioners Tuesday released details on Momentum 2026 Plus to continue to facilitate growth at Mount Vernon Outland Airport.

According to a press release from the airport, airport officials will soon embark on a long-term capital development plan titled Momentum

2026 Plus. Momentum 2026 Plus will address FAA infrastructure (lighting and pavements), increase aircraft storage, provide new roofing on key buildings, revitalize other structures, add airfield equipment and further the revitalization of airport areas that will be needed for future economic development.

“Momentum 2026 Plus will be funded through general obligation bonds, airport improvement program entitlements, new bipartisan infrastructure law funds and possible FAA discretionary grants,” said Airport Director Chris Collins.

Thanks to a collaborative effort by bond agent First Mid-State and

Fairfield National Bank, Momentum 2026 Plus is a longer than normal campaign. Typically, the Mount Vernon Airport Authority seeks a three-year period for its capital development plans.

But due to an incredible low and fixed interest rate contrasted by the threat of rising interest rates, airport officials focused on a longer term initiative,



**Chris Collins**

the press release states.

The board praised Brent Flota, associate with King's Financial Consulting Inc. in Monticello, for encouraging the board to move quickly on locking in its lower interest rates, which would have risen by at least a quarter of a percent by the Federal Reserve Board if they would have waited even one day.

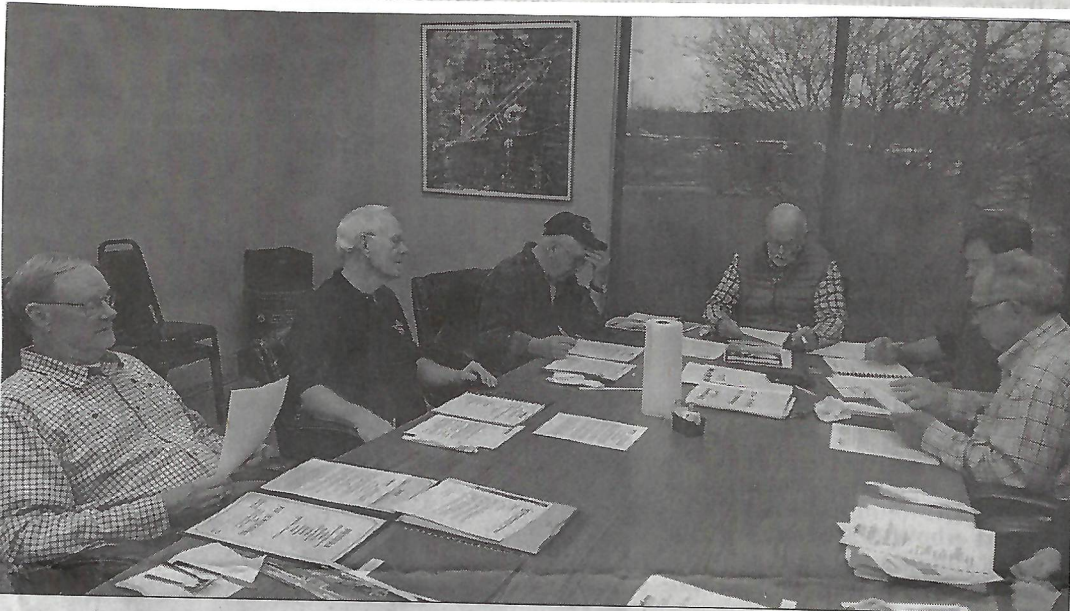
“We are happy to do it, we are glad that you guys recognized the opportunity in letting me pull the trigger,” Flota said. “Because really rates have continued to rise ... and I can't thank Fairfield National (enough) for holding those rates and being willing to stick with a percent

lower than what you can get now.”

Collins said it essentially boils down to that the higher the interest the less funding power you have, which is why locking in the interest rate was so important.

“All the board members thought it was smart, prudent and fiscally responsible to do that because ... if we did a three-year plan at 2.1% and three years from now we are looking at the next three-year plan and now the rate is 4%, then we are going to look pretty silly that we didn't lock in that 2.1% for that long term,” Collins said.

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Sentinel Photo/JOSH JONES

**MOMENTUM 2026 PLUS** — The Mount Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners heard an update regarding its long-term capital development plan known as “Momentum 2026 Plus” during its regular meeting Tuesday at Mount Vernon Outland Airport.

# Airport:

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Momentum 2026 Plus will net the airport \$1,428,000 for projects completed over the next seven years. Just like previous capital development plans, it is the goal of the MVAA to make improvements to the airport with little to no increase of property taxes. To date, the MVAA has accomplished this goal, the press release states.

The current Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funding proportional match is 90% federal, 5% state and 5% local. Rebuild Illinois is a state/local program that utilizes a 90%/10% match. Other grant programs the airport plans to make application to utilize other splits such as 80% federal and 20% local.

"These proportional scales require the airport (to) have funds on hand to match federal and state funds expended on projects. Many projects such as land acquisitions and projects mandated by the FAA that do not utilize airport entitlement funds require the airport to expend local dollars," Collins said. "Reimbursement is then applied for, and in many cases, takes years to recapture. The bottom line is that if the funds are not available in the airport's Capital Projects Fund, (an) airfield project, whether FAA mandated or not, may never initiate."

Regarding general obligation bonds, the airport intends to "dovetail" (extend) its current bonding schedule in an effort to provide local funding for projects and establish the matches for the federal/state projects. The airport's current non-referendum bond capacity is \$1.4 million.

To keep projects in line with

the Illinois Department of Transportation Division (IDOT) of Aeronautics Transportation Improvements program, the Mount Vernon Airport Authority intends to sell bonds for the next seven-year period. Mount Vernon Outland Airport's current non-referendum debt service extension base (DSEB) is \$255,444. The original DSEB established in 1997 by PTEL is \$205,900. Property tax rates are directly proportional to the EAV.

"To manage Momentum 2026 Plus with a pledge of little to no property tax increases, the Mount Vernon Airport Authority intends to sell bonds at an annual amount well below the existing Debt Service Extension Base of \$255,444," Collins said. "Doing so should keep the overall tax rate constant regardless of whether the EAV increases or decreases. Recognizing the EAV has increased steadily over the last several years, the MVAA desires to 'capture' a small percentage of the increases. Therefore, the annual bond and interest levy amount specified by Momentum 2026 will begin at \$205,900 for 2022/2023 and increase 2% each year adding approximately \$4,000 of net proceeds annually."

Collins said that the MVAA is not increasing the EAV, they are just trying to capture that \$4,000.

"We might be able to just take a small percentage off of that and use it for projects and we don't want a property tax increase, but we think there is money there that we could do a few more projects," Collins said. "We are willing to bet that we can do about \$4,000 in extra projects a year by capturing that EAV growth. ... We do not want to see an increase in taxes, that is the bottom line."

All general aviation airports without 10,000 enplanements

(air-carrier) per year, receive \$150,000 annually for capital improvements. The airports do not receive these funds directly. IDOT, Division of Aeronautics, acting on behalf of the FAA, administers the funds to contractors after all work is completed and reviewed by IDOT, IDA staff. All work is placed on a state letting schedule, entitlement funds are most often used for paving operations such as a runway/taxiway revitalizations.

In 2021, the IDOT, Division of Aeronautics, commissioned and released the Illinois Aviation System Plan/Economic Impact Analysis (IASP, EIA). The study was the culmination of airport surveys conducted to determine the individual and state-wide value of the Illinois Aviation System. The study was completed by Mesa, Arizona, based Kimley-Horn.

"There are several take-aways from the 2021 ISAP, EIA. First and foremost, Mount Vernon Outland Airport generates \$40.2 million dollars annually. Consider the airport's \$334,000 total tax levy, for every \$1 collected in taxes, the airport returns \$122," Collins said. "Second, 278 jobs are attributed to the airport. Third, the airport has a broad reach. ... The airport has truly become a gathering place for Southern Illinois."

Mount Vernon Outland Airport has many amenities currently in place to be one of the most successful airports in the Midwest: impressive infrastructure, excellent location, great service tenants, including aircraft maintenance and sales, skilled and dedicated 24/7 first responders, flight training and a team philosophy second to none. Momentum 2026 plus ensures Mount Vernon Outland Airport remains primed and ready for future growth, the press release states.

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