



STATE OF THE AIRPORT FY 2020/2021

BONNIE CAFÉ – MT. VERNON

Despite an exemption for airport restaurants, Bonnie Café Mt. Vernon temporarily closed in late March for safety and respect for other area business owners. The restaurant's official one year anniversary came and went during a two-month closure. The restaurant returned to being one of Mt. Vernon's most popular establishments, re-opening on June 1, 2020. The Bonnie Aviator's Club, a promotional program targeting repeat aviation operations, collected 48 member cards in calendar year 2020. Each card represented a regionally based aircraft owner/operator that visited five times!

CAA PREFERRED FBO

The airport's Preferred Fixed Base Operations status with the Corporate Aircraft Association went live in late July, 2020. Weekly negotiated rates, managed by the airport, and marketed by CAA allow all parties to benefit. Over 9000 turboprop and turbojet aircraft, representing 60% of the nation's fleet, are in the program. From onset to April 30, 2021, the airport has sold nearly 18,000 gallons of Jet A fuel accounting for 25% of its Jet A sales volume. These aircraft operations and fuel sales would not have occurred without CAA Preferred FBO status.

AVIATION PROGRAMS DIRECTOR

In early August, long time area flight instructor Jay Grafton re-joined Team MVN as the new Aviation Programs Director. Grafton previously worked at the airport as a flight instructor in 2008 and 2009. Jay returns to lead the flight training programs at SRT Aviation and the Southern Illinois LSA Academy. Eight new students have soloed, two have earned their Private Pilot Licenses, and three have become Commercial Pilots under Jay's direction.

THE NATION'S ONLY AVIATION EVENT

Midwest LSA Expo, socially distancing since 2009, brought aircraft buyers and sellers from across the nation to Mt. Vernon in September. Some exhibitors were not able to attend due to State travel restrictions but they were replaced by others. With Sun-n-Fun, EAA Airventure, and the Deland Aviation Showcase cancelled – Midwest LSA Expo was the only national aviation event in 2020!

FLIGHT SIMULATION LABORATORY

Safe Aviation Educators, operated by former FAA Designated Pilot Examiner and SIUC Chief Flight Instructor Leland Widick, opened a Flight Simulation Laboratory inside the Koziara Terminal in January. The centerpiece of the facility is a state of the art Redbird SD Simulator. The Redbird allows based student and regional pilots a realistic tool to learn and practice flight concepts as well as complete instrument currency requirements.

on the ground. Such capabilities are normally found at university aviation programs or at professional pilot training centers.

BUSINESS GROWTH

Kash Helicopters added a second Bell UH1 “Huey” Helicopter bringing the company’s total fleet to four helicopters. In April, the airport welcomed a new HondaJet to the family. More significant turbine aircraft are expected to join the fleet mix in 2021.

AVIATION REPORT

The Annual Aviation Report for calendar year 2020 was published in February, 2021. Total operations decreased 11% over the previous year (24,560 in 2020 as compared to 27,333 in 2019). Total based inventory remains at 45 (33 Single Engine Land, 8 Multi-Engine Land, and 4 Helo).