

Airport Perimeter Access Road project completed

A final inspection is pending

BY JOSH JONES

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MOUNT VERNON — The Mount Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners heard an update on various ongoing projects Tuesday at Mount Vernon Outland Airport.

Mount Vernon Airport Director Chris Collins reported that the perimeter access road rehabilitation project is now complete.

"The perimeter access road is finished and we are awaiting the final inspection by the Division of Aeronautics," Collins said.

According to Sentinel archives, the perimeter access road project involved the rehabilitation of the interior perimeter service road by placing asphalt. The road was paved and is 16 foot wide and 8 inches thick. Southern Illinois Asphalt is the company that was awarded the bid for the project. The local cost of the project was \$18,011.56, the federal share was

\$18,011.56 for a total project cost of \$439,125.45.

Collins said that the airport expects the Division of Aeronautics to conduct the final inspection in the coming weeks. He said the roads will be a benefit for future development at the airport.

"It turned out really well, a very smooth drive from one end to the other, which is what we were after and it takes the wear and tear off of the vehicles," Collins said.

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Collins said that he expected to have a pre-construction meeting "very soon" on the Innovation Park sewer utility project. Sentinel archives state that the project is estimated to cost approximately \$192,850 and would include replacing and relocating a 50 plus year old cast iron sewer pipe. The Jefferson County Board approved using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for the project in October 2021. JK Trotter & Sons was the only bidder for the project.

"The contractor has indicated that he could start later this month," Collins said.

Collins said that Architect Brian Edmison was in attendance and the board went over the plans for the Innovation Park Turbine Center (Hangar Two).

"The hangar portion is a carbon copy of our community hangar in that it is 107 feet in length and 104 foot in width, with the same 28 foot tall door that is a 100 feet in width," Collins said. "The big deal is the office complex on the front."

Collins said that after going through the plans the board approved for the project to move forward.

"It is not 100% set in stone, but it is very close and the importance of getting this dialed in is so we can do this preliminary engineering report required by the EDA (Economic Development Assistance) grant application," Collins said.



Chris Collins

The grant has a 20% local match and an 80% federal match on it, Sentinel archives state.

"It (the project) is completely dependent on EDA, without EDA we wouldn't be able to afford it," Collins said, later adding, "The intent with this building is the owners of the Honda Jet have some business ventures that will occupy half of the office structure and the other half will be individual offices for the airport to market to small businesses. We already have at least two that want to come aboard."

Collins said the Air Evac 172 permanent base will have to be in operation before the hangar can be built. The Air Evac's temporary base is where the new hangar will be located. He said regarding the permanent base, the board approved seeking a Phase One Environmental study.

"Customary outside of the FAA is to do a phase one to show that everything is good on the start and phase one comes when a tenant leaves showing it is good again when they leave," Collins said.

Collins said that the major lighting replacement project for the runway and taxiways came in over budget. According to Sentinel archives, the MVAA has been planning a major lighting replacement project that includes replacing lights on the primary runway, the cross runway and the taxiways at the airport. The project was initially estimated at \$1.96 million, with a \$98,000 local share. The project is paid for through the Airport Improvement Program.

"Replace high-intensity lights on the primary runway and replace medium intensity lights on the cross runway. ... The low bid was \$1,258,808, the engineer's estimate was \$980,125," Collins said. "On the taxiway lights, the low bid was \$1,823,215, the engineer's estimate was \$1,227,425. That is significantly more."

Collins said that the airport still doesn't have any guidance if one or both projects will be funded. He said that they will know more after the airport's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) meeting, which will be held at 10 a.m. Oct. 17 in Springfield.

"One thing we can be reasonably sure of is the local share (5%) is going to be much more," Collins said.

IN OTHER BUSINESS:

- The board noted the success of this year's Midwest LSA Expo.

- Aviation Programs Director/Flight Instructor Jay Grafton flew 72.75 hours in August, which is 105% of his salary. Collins noted that the airport is seeking a second flight instructor due to the continued success of the program.

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