

Air Evac 11 & 172 plan to relocate in joint base

*Preparations are
ongoing at Mount
Vernon Outland Airport*

BY JOSH JONES

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MOUNT VERNON — After several months of work, the Mount Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners and Air Evac EMS have approved an agreement paving the way for Air Evac Joint Base Jefferson County.

According to a press release from the airport authority, Joint Base Jefferson County will house aircraft and crews from both Air Evac Lifeteam 11, currently located on Avia-

tion Drive, and Air Evac Lifeteam 172, temporarily located at 100 Firebaugh Drive.

The Joint Base Jefferson County will be constructed at 500 Firebaugh Drive in the airport's Innovation Park. Air Evac's new home places it near the center of the airport and adjacent to the primary runway. The new location not only provides safer arrivals and departures during VFR (Visual Flight Rules) conditions, but meets all requirements for IFR (Instrument Flight Rules) approaches during poor weather conditions, the press release states.

"On behalf of the Mount Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners, I want to thank Architect

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Brian Edmison, Barry Stolz of Hanson Professional Services, and Airport Legal Counsel Scott Quinn for their guidance and involvement," said Airport Director Chris Collins. "The Design/Build/Finance/Lease Agreement was complex. There were many construction, legal, environmental, and fiduciary elements to consider. It took time and an experienced team to ensure the process was done correctly."

Air Evac 172 Program Director Brian Martinez said that the aircrafts will have their own designations, but will be co-located.

"We have been excited about this prospect in being able to continue to work with Chris Collins and the airport," Martinez said. "They have been great partners with us for Air Evac for over 20 years. So we are just looking forward to be able to further that relationship."

Martinez said that there are several benefits to the joint base, including lower operating costs.

"It honestly provides more of a seamless operation between two helicopters. Right now we are located about 800 yards apart and while we are on the same airport there is still some communication issues between two aircraft," Martinez said. "It will just make for a safer, cleaner operation. Air Evac has always been so thankful to be part of the Mount Vernon community and we look forward to many more years of that relationship with both of these aircraft and the relationship with Mount Vernon Airport."

In terms of flight operations, Air Evac 11 is one of the busiest bases in the Air Evac Lifeteam's nationwide network. With a 385 nautical mile range, Air Evac 172's Airbus EC-135 nearly all-weather aircraft provides services from Mount Vernon Outland Airport to communities across state lines.

"We are proud to announce the Air Evac Lifeteam Joint Base Jefferson County. The base will be a long-term asset for Southern Illinois as well as a great anchor tenant for Innovation Park," said Marty Cox, MVAA Chairman. 10-15-22
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AIR EVAC — Through an agreement involving the Mount Vernon Airport Authority and Air Evac 11 and 172, a joint base will be constructed for both teams. This should help on cutting down operation costs as well as streamlining communication.