

OUTLAND NEWS - SEPTEMBER, 2022

Welcome to the ninth edition of Mt. Vernon Outland Airport News (Outland News). Outland News is intended to be a quarterly glimpse of all things that make Mt. Vernon Outland Airport a special place including airport tenants (known as Team MVN), airport events, airport projects, community outreach, and long term goals.



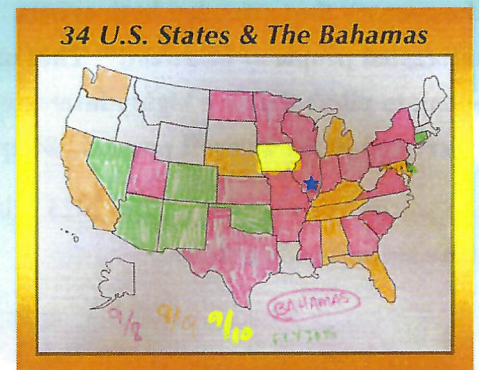
Midwest LSA Expo Wrap-Up - Metrics Reveal the Strength of These "Sector-Specific Shows" September 26, 2022, By Dan Johnson, bydanjohnson.com

Sun-n-Fun does it. EAA Airventure Oshkosh did it. Why not the smaller, sector-specific shows? Indeed, why not? I refer to reporting of show statistics when the event concludes. In modern vernacular, these are "metrics". MVN Airport Director Chris Collins, has been forwarding some "metrics" from this year's 14th annual event. Whatever you choose to call the numbers from any event, they provide useful information on how the show performed. One comment/measurement is the number of airplanes sold or the quantity of interested pilots who expressed real interest. Trying to get hard information is like nailing jello to a wall. We get tidbits and potential hard facts are hard to assemble. A genuinely interested person ready to make a deal could experience problems right after the event. Some (understandably) need to check with their spouse; that sometimes alters a decision. Still, people like Chris and myself ask the vendors how they are doing. It is quicker and easier than trying to poll every pilot, plus the vendors have perspective from earlier versions of this show or other aviation trade events.



Exhibitor Eric Bruce, representing ELA Gyroplanes Eclipse 10, explains the aircraft to interested attendees at Midwest 2022.

My guesstimate is that at least ten airplanes were sold as determined by cash changing hands. That's not appreciably more or less than other Midwest LSA Expos, but this year two data points stand out: (1) sellers reporting many good contacts - virtually every exhibitor agreed - and (2) the large number of demo flights. Most vendors appeared to conduct numerous demo flights for interested pilots. I often saw multiple airplanes at any one time preparing to get a new aviator in the seat for a flight. The surrounding area is wide-open and the weather simply invited more flying, every day of the event (*rain finally did come but not until the end of the final day*). One extra treat was a good gathering of KR kit builders as they celebrated the 50th Anniversary of this well established design.



Tri-State Kites-maker of the derivative Smithsilver series of very light aircraft, brought a sizable flock to the event as they often do (their base is not far away). They offer many variations and business is "very good, almost too good" right now, said Andy Alldredge.

As for metrics, Chris noted, "visitors from 34 States attended. One gentleman (came) from the Bahamas. We parked 107 itinerant aircraft," Chris continued, "We had 30 RV spots (with hook-ups to our power grid). Numerous people (including five at their aircraft) camped in tents. Our on field restaurant (centrally located inside the Koziara Terminal) was busy from dawn to well past dusk all three days. The most important metric may be the amount of demo rides given. Chris acknowledged, "I don't have official records for this, but as one of the lead air traffic safety monitors, I can attest several exhibitors were in the air at least six times each day."

(Continued on Page #2)

"When the exhibitors are conducting demo flights, the Expo is doing what it is designed to do. Of course mother nature has a lot to do with this year's success as the Expo was blessed with 2.5 days of near perfect flying conditions." Chris defined a goal: "The core foundational elements will always be unrestricted demo flights and exhibitor/attendee interaction. We always look forward to taking care of all visitors at Midwest LSA Expo."

But Wait, Here's More!

"We sold 600 gallons of Mo-Gas at Expo 2022. That's nearly double our normal sales volume. Now 600 gallons isn't a large number when it comes to fuel sales at an airport," Chris added (a few private jets can buy that much), "but it is significant when providing 6-8 gallons per fueling." One of the beauties of LSA Sport Pilot kits and ultralights is how little fuel they use but that is not a big plus for a major metro airport used to selling thousands of gallons of go-juice per month. Yet Chris and his team act like they're servicing a biz-jet with their prompt service by fuel truck to onboard a few gallons per airplane.



Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Rand KR Series of Kitplanes, a group met at Midwest as they have done before, hosting forums and builder assist sessions.

"The weekend after the Expo, a group of us visited Tri-State Kites," said Chris. "We ran into several people from across the country that attended both events. Proprietor Andy Alldredge told me he distributed over 150 business cards to interested people at Midwest!" That might not be a big quantity compared to Oshkosh, but at Midwest, vendors generally speak to pilots that are highly interested. With no airshow or warbirds or movie stars, attendees at Mt. Vernon are interested in the aircraft present. Simply, if they come, they're interested.

Another metric came compliments of flight-tracking website Flightaware.com. "That site recorded nearly 40% increase on their arrival/departures data when compared to 2021." Chris explained.

See you at **Midwest LSA Expo 2023** - the 15th year of the event, when it will tie the Sebring Expo as the longest running of these sector specific shows.

FLIGHT ACHIEVEMENTS



KSPI FSDO Manager Stan Swank, Leland Widick, and FAA FFAST Team's Warren Smith.

Congratulations to Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award winner Leland Widick. The WBMPA is presented by the FAA to aviators that have safely flown more than 50 years without accidents/incidents. Leland served as a DPE (Designated Pilot Examiner) for nearly 30 years. He also spent 20 years as the Chief Flight Instructor at SIUC. Leland currently operates Safe Aviation Educators.



FAA DPE Steve Goetz & Light Sport Pilot Phil Bean



(Left) 1st Solo James Patrick.



(Right) 1st Solo Denise Rueda & CFI Jay Grafton.



1st Solo Jacob Beachy