

# Airport sees new records during Aviation Report

*The airport's economic input also received high regards*

BY JOSH JONES

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MOUNT VERNON — The Mount Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners recently heard the 2022 Aviation Report with most categories seeing increases.

Airport Director Chris Collins said that 2022 marked a great year for the airport. He noted how total operations were greatly up from 2021's 26,696 operations.

"2022 was a great year, so much so it was the best year in my tenure, 28,845 total operations, the second best was about 28,000 in 2019 when AirGo was here and up and running very well," Collins said.

Collins credited the increase in total operations to many areas including local flight training now having four planes in their flight training school, AirEvac setting a record for total flights in October and more.

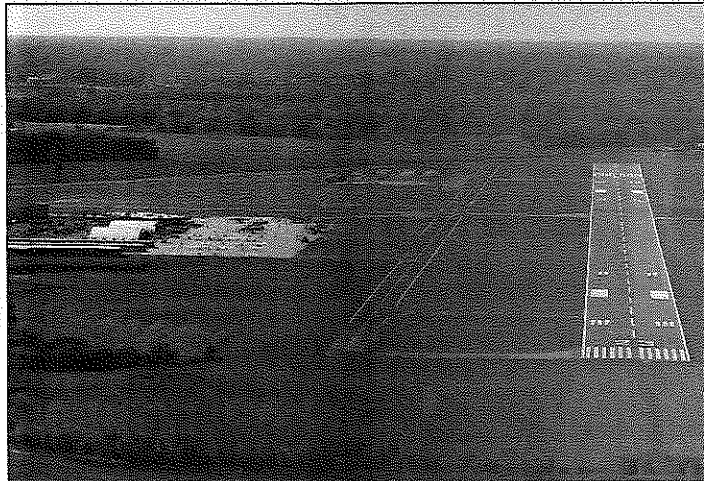
"I also mentioned that we had two really well attended and busy national aviation events with the Midwest LSA Expo and the Air Race Classic, both had a tremendous amount of operations and we also had heavy restaurant traffic (Bonnie Cafe)," Collins said.

Collins said that the airport also saw 360 jet operations for 2022 which is also another record.

"The previous record for jet operations was 308 and that was back in 2011 when we had all the fracking speculation going on," Collins said.

Collins said that he believes the difference made with jet operations comes from the airport being a part

Please see **Airport**, Page 2A



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## Airport:

*Continued from Page 1A*

of the Corporate Aircraft Association (CAA). The program gives negotiated Jet A Fuel Pricing to pilots who choose to stop at CAA member airports.

"Even that one set a record. We had 256 Corporate Aircraft Association stops. Last year 150 and the previous year, which was a partial year, we had 88," Collins said. "So that program is moving in the right direction."

The only drop was in the amount of aircraft based at the airport. Currently the airport houses 34 single engine land airplanes, five multi-engine land airplanes and six helicopters for a total of 45 based aircraft. This is down from the previous year, which had 46 based aircraft.

"It ebbs and flows and with all the pilot starts going on, we are hoping the newly certified pilots might buy an airplane," Collins said.

Collins also shared some statistics that he featured at a recent Jefferson County Development Corporation meeting, which came from the recent Illinois Depart-

ment of Transportation Airport Inventory Report.

"They ranked the airports in the state by total economic input and ours ranked 22

out of 75, for public use airports in terms of economic input and we ranked 24 out of 75 for total number of jobs," Collins said. "We are the smallest market in that top 25, so very proud of those rankings."

Collins shared his thoughts on this year's Aviation Report. He said the goal is to make the experience easy and enjoyable for all visitors.

"It makes me very proud, it is a huge team that is making this work. It is not any one entity or one person," Collins said. "We have a very dedicated flightline crew. Those are the guys that are parking the airplanes and selling fuel. They do a real good job. We stress talking on the radio to visitors and having the restaurant tie in (Bonnie Cafe) is a huge deal. ... It is just a total facility and team effort." 2-21-23

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Chris Collins