

# Bids to go out for two major airport projects

*Updates were given on Air Evac Joint Base Jefferson and the FBO addition*

**BY JOSH JONES**

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**MOUNT VERNON** — The Mount Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners Tuesday moved forward with requesting bids for two major projects.

Airport Director Chris Collins said that Air Evac Joint Base Jefferson is moving forward with plans to have the project notice for bidders in local media on April 19.

"Bids are due May 18 with a pre bid meeting here at the airport on May 2," Collins said.

According to Sentinel archives, the base will house aircraft and crews from both Air Evac Life-team 11, currently located on Aviation Drive, and Air Evac Life-team 172, temporarily located at

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100 Firebaugh Drive. The base is to 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.

"It is exciting to see it coming to fruition," Collins said, later adding, "We have now a 23 year relationship with Air Evac and it is going to be exciting to see that stretched out much further than 23 years with this project."

Collins said the contract states that the work should be completed within 180 days of the bid being accepted, barring anything unforeseen happening.

"Anticipated completion would be somewhere in December," Collins said.

The board also voted to move forward on seeking bids for its Fixed Based Operations (FBO) building. According to Sentinel archives, the board began to look at the addition after noticing how much traffic they were getting from pilots. Collins said that the FBO building acts as a "front door" for pilots to Mount Vernon and Southern Illinois and is a first impression to many pilots. Collins said that he worked with Architect Brian Edmison and Commissioner Carey Lipps on the design.

"We solidified the design and refined the budget," Collins said.

The addition is to be 24 feet wide by 32 feet long including large windows for visitors to view the runways and taxiways, a 24/7 restroom and it shifts the entry of the building to the west.

"The addition into the building is more attractive and modern, instead of where it is now where our visitors come in through a 1975 vestibule with doors

that open in the wrong directions and your first view is right into the back of a kitchenette," Collins said.

The project is estimated to cost about \$130,000.

"We still think that number might be high and we will never know until we bid it," Collins said.

Collins said that they have been constantly welcoming visitors from out of state with recent visitors being from New Hampshire and Florida.

"We are going to make Mount Vernon's front door more updated, nicer and high end," Collins said.

Collins said that it is the Airport Authority's goal to have this addition completed by Sept. 1 in time for the Midwest LSA Expo.

## IN OTHER BUSINESS

- Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter 1155 presented two \$1,000 scholarships to Venita Brown and Joel Beehn.

- The board is speaking with Ameren regarding power outage issues at the airport. They are also speaking with Ameren on including electric vehicle charging outlets in their parking lot.

- Collins said the board was informed that its major lighting project, which includes replacing lights on the primary runway, the cross runway and the taxiways, has been placed on the Illinois Department of Transportation's April 28 letting schedule.

- The airport recently saw its total fuel sales beat its previous record with 124,690 gallons sold, with five weeks remaining. The previous best during the modern era was 117,000 gallons sold.

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**Chris Collins**



Sentinel File Photo

**OUT FOR BID** — The Mount Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners Tuesday moved forward with requesting bids for two major projects.