

Airport moves forward on lighting initiative

*The project may
start in November*

BY JOSH JONES

SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

MOUNT VERNON — The Mount Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners received an update on a major upcoming lighting project during Tuesday's meeting.

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 scope of work includes replacing all of the wiring that dates back to the 1960s with modern day high efficiency state-of-the-art lighting. The taxiway lights will all be LED. The project had been bid two times previously, but was unable to move forward.

Airport Director Chris Collins said that recently the project was awarded to Brown Electric of Gorville.

"We are very excited because Brown has been the contractor that has done I would say nearly 100% of our airfield lighting projects since I have been at the airport," Col-

lins said. "So they are very familiar with our airport as well as all airports across the state."

Collins said that the entire project will cost approximately \$3,156,951, with the federal government paying \$2,341,254 (90% match), the state paying \$157,848 (5% match) and the airport paying \$157,848 (5%).



Chris Collins

Collins spoke on the challenges the airport has faced with this project.

"It has been bid three times. The first time there were zero bidders, the second time the low bid far exceeded the engineer's estimate, so I guess third time's the charm," Collins said. "I believe the first two times the project was bid, Brown Electric was excluded from bidding, because they had too many projects underway with the state and the state has some rules about how many projects can be going on with one contractor and how much money is being expended."

Collins said the airport is overall happy to see things move forward.

"The best part of it is we got what we believe to be a very fine contractor that is very familiar with our facility, has history here and provided a good price," Collins said.

Collins said that the project could start as early as November, but no firm date has been set.

"It is going to have some impact on us, because there are going to be runway closures and we dislike runway closures because that impacts our bottom line financially, you can't bring airplanes

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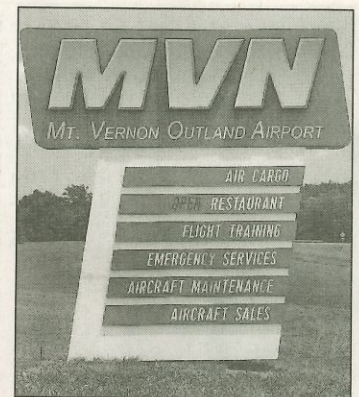
Airport:

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in, you can't sell fuel or do maintenance. There are going to be some negative impacts," Collins said. "On the other side of it, the utility bill is certainly going to be decreased by state-of-the-art lighting as well as LED, so for that we are really excited. We have to go through hard times to get to the good."

IN OTHER BUSINESS:

- A moment of silence was held for the late Don Pruett. He was recognized for his contributions to the community including the flying of the American flag by helicopter during Independence Day and Memorial Day.
- Design work is ongoing regarding the Joint Base Jefferson and Fixed Based Operations entrance projects.
- The board discussed the success of the Bonnie Cafe remodel.
- The airport is looking further into specifications regarding the Air Rescue Firefighting Truck.
- The board renewed a contract for one year with Constellation Energy for natural gas at .54 a therm. The contract starts in November.
- The board heard a presentation on solar from Af-



Sentinel File Photo

LIGHTING PROJECT — The Mount Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners received an update on a major upcoming lighting project during Tuesday's meeting.

- fordable Gas and Electric.
- The board approved the 23/24 annual budget ordinance.
- The board approved the 23/24 annual tax levy ordinance. Collins said that the airport is proud to have the levy frozen for the ninth consecutive year at \$123,128.
- The board approved the prevailing wage rate ordinance.
- Flight Instructor Jay Grafton flew 78.4 hours in July, which is 105% of his salary.
- The airport's 737 Charlie-Zulu airplane flew 40.7 hours in July.

jjones@morningsentinel.com