

# Groundbreaking set next week for Air Evac base

*The cost of the  
project is \$1.9 million*

**BY TRAVIS MORSE**  
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**MOUNT VERNON** — A groundbreaking ceremony is scheduled next Monday for the planned Air Evac Joint Base Jefferson at Mount Vernon Outland Airport.

The celebration will take place at noon on Monday, Nov. 20, in the Mount Vernon Outland Airport Banquet Room. Those who attend will have the chance to visit with Air Evac personnel and their partners on the project, including Hanson; Brian P. Edmison, Architect; First National Bank (Wayne City Branch); and Evvard Company Incorporated.

According to Sentinel archives, the new base will house aircraft and crews from both Air Evac Lifeteam 11, currently located on Aviation Drive, and Air Evac Lifeteam 172, temporarily located at 100 Firebaugh Dr. The base will be built at 500 Firebaugh Dr. in the airport's Innovation Park. Recently, the Mount Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners approved a \$1.9 million bid from Evvard Company of Marion for construction of the new base.

"It's been several years since we celebrated in this fashion," said Airport Director Chris Collins of next week's groundbreaking. "The last time was the community hangar back in around 2011. Any time you can launch a significant project like that, it's a big deal. Especially with such a fine partner as Air Evac."

Collins said Air Evac plays a major role in not only this community but the entire southern third of the state, transporting injured people to hospitals across the region. Air Evac 11 is a consistent top performer for Air Evac in terms of operations per month, officials said.

"They're making a sizable invest-

ment in our community by doing this project here at the airport," Collins said. "I know \$2 million isn't a huge amount considering everything going on in the community, but it is a significant amount to us, especially considering that (Air Evac) is offering life-saving services every time they take off."

Heather Morse, regional director of Air Evac Lifeteam, commented Wednesday on the upcoming groundbreaking and the planned new base.

"We look forward to our ongoing partnership with Mount Vernon Airport and appreciate their support through the years," Morse said. "With the addition of the IFR (In-

strument Flight Rules) program, it became clear that we would like to be in a large building to join our IFR and VFR (Visual Flight Rules) programs. The airport's partnership has allowed us to accomplish this in 2024."

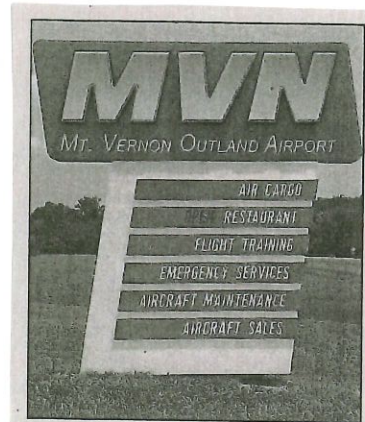
This is described as a "design build lease project" where the airport is handling the construction costs. However, the building would be leased to Air Evac, and then the construction loan and the monthly lease would be tied into the monthly payment that Air Evac pays to the airport, Collins said.

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A firm time frame has not been announced for completion of the new Air Evac base, but it is expected to be finished in 2024. The base and next week's groundbreaking were among the projects discussed at Tuesday night's Mount Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners meeting. Other projects to come up included the Fixed Based Operations Building addition, the airfield lighting replacement projects, and the airport's new fire truck.

For more information, contact Mount Vernon Outland Airport.

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Sentinel File Photo

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