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Outland Airport eyes annual Aviation Report

Airport also plans to apply for a planning grant for Innovation Park

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MOUNT VERNON — Mount Vernon Outland Airport saw an increase in total operations last year, according to the facility's 2023 Aviation Report.

On Tuesday, Feb. 13, the Mount Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners heard a presenta-

tion on the 2023 report from Airport Director Chris Collins. With the Aviation Report, Collins reports to the board every February about the previous year's operations, as well as giving board members a look at the "tenant base" from the prior year. The tenant base refers to what kind and how many aircraft are at the airport.

In 2023, the airport had 29,802 total operations, up nearly 1,000 over the prior year's number of 28,845. Also last year, Mount Vernon Airport set a record for the amount of jet operations there at 376, which was 16 more than the prior year's total of 360.

The local airport also set a record last year for Corporate Aircraft Association stops at 308, the report states. These are stops where the aircraft are coming in just to pick up fuel and depart. About four years ago, Mount Vernon Airport became a preferred fixed base operation in the Corporate Aircraft Association and operators receive a discount on their fuel purchases across the country when they stop at member corporate operators like the local airport, Collins said.

In addition, military operations were also up at the airport last year at 72, an increase over the prior year's 60. Mount Vernon Air-

port had aircraft from all branches of the military last year except for the Navy, Collins said.

"Those numbers show that the airport is thriving," Collins said of the Aviation Report. "There's a lot of people coming here for a lot of different reasons — competitively priced fuel, the Bonnie Cafe, that corporate contract. Air Evac



Chris Collins

is setting records with the amount of operations they're doing, our maintenance shop is bringing in a tremendous amount of work and there's tenants on the field that fly almost every day for business. And that shows in these numbers. And the flight school has four aircraft. When the weather is good, they're flying every day, all four aircraft."

One slight drop noted in the Aviation Report was in the number of aircraft based at the airport in 2023, or the base tenant report. Last year, Mount Vernon Airport had 40 aircraft, down from the previous

Please see **Airport**, Page 2A



Sentinel File Photo

AVIATION REPORT — Mount Vernon Outland Airport saw an increase in total operations last year, according to the facility's 2023 Aviation Report.

Airport:

Continued from Page 1A

year's 45. They included 34 single engine aircraft, three multi-engine, two helicopters and one jet.

Collins pointed out that when Airgo had a flight academy at the local airport, the number of aircraft was at around 52. Also last year, Mount Vernon Airport lost Kash Helicopter Company, which reduced the number of helicopters at the airport. Industry-wide there is a move away from multi-engine propeller aircraft to single-engine turbo props that burn jet fuel, and there are three of those currently at the airport, Collins said.

"We were down slightly, but we'll rebound," Collins said of the number of aircraft. "What we lack in quantity, we make up for in quality. We have four Cirrus SR22 (aircraft), one Pilatus PC-12 and the Cirrus Vision Jet."

Also on Tuesday, Collins informed the Airport Board that the airport is going to apply for a planning grant for the Innovation Park Development, an area the airport is seeking to develop in the southwest quadrant of the site. The Rural Business Development Grant, if awarded, will assist with planning for the future development of the airport, Collins said.

"What the grant would do, if we were chosen, it would (fund hiring for) a consultant firm to do a land use and development plan. It would be an aviation consulting firm, one that works nationwide," Collins said. "The plan will provide clear direction to develop the area and identify potential industries of interest to locate there. ... If we were chosen to be awarded a grant like this, I understand it could lead to further grant funding."

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