

Midwest Aviation Expo returns to Mount Vernon

Airport event has new name, but same layout

BY TRAVIS MORSE

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MOUNT VERNON — The 16th annual Midwest Aviation Expo will return to Mount Vernon Outland Airport from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sept. 5 through Sept. 7.

Formerly known as the Midwest LSA Expo, organizers changed the name to open up the event for other kinds of airplane manufacturers, not just "Light Sport Aircraft." The Federal Aviation Administration is considering changing some rules on how pilots receive certificates and what category or class of aircraft these pilots can fly. As a result, sport pilots will likely be eligible to fly larger and faster airplanes, said Mount Vernon Airport Director Chris Collins.

"So we simply got out ahead of the change," Collins said.

And even though the name is slightly different, the expo will have the same layout as previous years' events. About 40 aircraft-related vendors will be on hand for this year's expo, and

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a wide variety of Light Sport Aircraft and other types of aircraft will be on display. In addition, the expo will feature a number of aviation seminars and forums on different topics.

"It's simply a connection of buyers and sellers at one convenient location across the country," Collins said. "So people looking for an airplane can fly here commercially or drive and shop the various models and take demo flights. It makes for a better, more informed decision for buying an airplane."

The seminars and forums also provide an educational component to the expo, Collins said. Among the presentations this year will be a seminar on weather provided by former WSIL-TV3 Chief Meteorologist Nick Hausen at 3 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 5; a MO-SAIC update from Light Aircraft Manufacturers Association President Scott Severin at 11 a.m. on Friday, Sept. 6; and a seminar on looking out for agriculture drones in the sky from Maggie Schuster at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 7. These are just a few of the presenters that will be at the expo.

"We're out at the forefront on a lot of these subjects," Collins said. "A lot of people will be here for those. We're very proud of the presentations that we have to offer people."



Sentinel File Photo

AVIATION EXPO — Phillip Pennell, RIGHT, vice president of Future Pilots Fund, shows two visitors a 1962 Piper Cherokee 160 that was on display at last year's 15th annual Midwest LSA Expo at Mount Vernon Outland Airport. This year's expo, renamed the Midwest Aviation Expo, runs from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sept. 5 through Sept. 7. It allows buyers and sellers in the aviation industry to meet face-to-face and discuss and demonstrate products.

New to this year's expo will be two aircrafts on display related to Charles Lindbergh's historic flight across the Atlantic, from New York City to Paris, in 1927. One of the airplanes will be the one used by Charles Lindbergh's grandson, Eric Lindbergh, to replicate his grandfather's flight across the Atlantic. The other aircraft on display will be a replica of Charles Lindbergh's original Spirit of St. Louis. Both will be available to view, thanks to the Lindbergh Foundation.

Collins said that the Midwest Aviation Expo in Mount Vernon is now the only event of its kind in the U.S., after the event in Florida recently stopped. The event draws a large number of people to Mount Vernon and has

helped put the local airport on the map, Collins said. He urged local residents to attend the event and to shake the hands of visitors from out of town who will be there. This helps preserve Mount Vernon's reputation as a friendly place that everyone wants to come back to, Collins said.

"It gives our airport prestige and our community a spotlight for three days," Collins said of the expo, later adding, "This is our signature event. It puts us on the map. It's a very exciting three days."

Everyone is welcome to attend the expo, and there is free admission, parking, camping and ground transportation. For more information, contact Mount Vernon Outland Airport at (618) 242-7016.