

Mount Vernon Airport moves forward with parking lot project

Construction is starting now and project will last 84 days

BY TRAVIS MORSE

tmorse@morningsentinel.com

MOUNT VERNON — Mount Vernon Outland Airport planned to start construction Sept. 16 on a major new parking lot rehabilitation and entry road project.

The project, estimated at \$977,348, is mostly being funded through the state's Rebuild Illinois Capital Plan, and the contractor is E.T. Simonds of Carbondale. Mount Vernon Airport Authority's local share of the project is \$97,734, said Airport Director Chris Collins. It is a 90% state/10% local project, in terms of funding.

"The project covers the total rehabilitation of all vehicle parking lots, aircraft feeder roads and Firebaugh Drive," Collins said. "Several sections of concrete curbing will be replaced. Aviation Drive will be crack-filled and seal coated."

Collins gave an update on the parking lot rehabilitation at a meeting Sept. 10 of the Mount Vernon Airport Authority (MVAA) Board of Commissioners. Earlier that same day, a pre-construction meeting was held with representatives of the airport, Illinois Department of Transportation/IDA staff, Hanson Professional Services Engineers and E.T. Simonds Management.

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The start date for construction on the project was Monday, Sept. 16, and the project is expected to take 84 calendar days to complete, extending into early December. The work will be completed in multiple phases to minimize traffic flow and disturbances to airport tenants, Collins said.

"From a total cost and scope perspective, this project is huge for the airport," Collins said.

"The FAA rarely participates in projects 'outside the airport fencing,' so without the Rebuild Illinois Program this project would have been 100% reliant on local funding sources. The MVAA would have to phase this project over several years, incurring more costs and disruptions. The Mount Vernon Airport Authority thanks Governor JB Pritzker, the Illinois Department of Transportation and members of the Illinois General Assembly for Rebuild Illinois."

The parking lot rehabilitation project was originally submitted for approval about two years ago, but was delayed because the IDOT Division of Aeronautics is short-staffed and there are many projects out there, Sentinel archives state.

The base bid portion of the project includes a rehabilitation of the airport's main parking lot, as well as the T-Hangar parking lot. It also includes the small feeder roads that extend to gates 1 and 2.

Also included in the project are seal-coating and crack-filling work on Aviation Drive, concrete work on the flight line side of the terminal, milling off the old surface of Firebaugh Drive and replacing it with asphalt and rehabilitating the roadway to Gateway 3 and the parking lots for SRT Aviation, the fixed base operations building.

Collins said previously that it is great that the airport's parking lot project was chosen for Rebuild Illinois, a bi-partisan state capital funding program announced in 2021. The airport only has bonding capacity for about \$210,000 a year. If the airport were to fund this project alone, it would likely have to be spaced out over about five or six years because of all the other capital projects that the airport needs to take care of, Collins has said.

For more information on this project, contact Mount Vernon Outland Airport.

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MAJOR PROJECT — Mount Vernon Outland Airport planned to start construction Sept. 16 on a major new parking lot rehabilitation and entry road project.



Chris Collins