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**SOLAR PROJECT** — Installation work is expected to start this week on a major solar panel project at Mount Vernon Outland Airport.

## Mount Vernon Airport eyes progress on solar project

*Installation set to begin this week*

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**MOUNT VERNON** — A major solar project at Mount Vernon Outland Airport is getting closer to becoming a reality.

This week, installation work will begin on the effort, which involves placing roof-mounted solar panels on two hangar buildings at the airport — Hangar A-1100 and Hangar A-1200. Once the panels start

generating electricity, they are expected to save the airport roughly \$28,000 a year on energy costs.

Airport Director Chris Collins provided an update on the project during the April 8 meeting of the Mount Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners.

"These two systems, they will be feeding power into the Kozara Terminal (and) it's going to offset the power bills for the terminal," Collins said, later adding, "This is an exciting time for the airport."

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## Airport:

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This is phase one of a two-phase project to install solar panels at the airport to offset rising energy costs. The total cost of phase one is roughly \$420,000. Even so, the airport will receive subsidies from the state and federal government to cover about 93% of that cost, Collins said. That means that the out-of-pocket cost for the airport will be somewhere in the neighborhood of \$30,000.

Phase two of this project will involve installing panels on THangar-800. Installation work will begin on that effort after the first phase is complete. The phase two project will offset 100% of the airport's energy costs for the airfield lighting circuits and the

Fixed Based Operations building. The total cost of phase two is about \$174,000, but the state and federal subsidies will cut that cost down to about \$13,500.

"The magic is in the subsidies," Collins said. "Otherwise, it would be difficult to fund these types of projects."

A firm time frame has not been announced for the completion of this two-phase solar project. The airport has also investigated other possible solar projects, such as leasing fields on airport property to solar developers, but these initiatives have not yet moved forward.

Also on April 8, Collins updated the Airport Board on a number of other projects. The board also declared some surplus equipment, and approved the purchase of a small tractor at a cost of \$13,493. 4/15/25